# THE DECALOGUE IN EARLY REFORMED TEACHING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CALVIN

by

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The problem of the Decalogue belongs equally to dogmatics and to ethics. It is, to use an analogy, a sort of hinge joining the two areas of a believing person's interest. As a human being, the believer belongs to an order that may be called "nature" or the "world", an order conditioned mostly by physical or quasi-physical standards; but as a believer he rests upon a hope beyond this world, the certainty of which derives from a revelation of a Being Who is unaccountable in natural terms. There is a certain exclusiveness about each experience. Some would say it was absolute, and would stand dogmatically upon the materialist or the spiritual side.[1] Others,[2] refuting both attitudes as essentially negative and pessimistic, are still forced to admit that between the two experiences there exists a tension irresolvable except by a faith that looks beyond the present to an origin and a consummation in the divine but inscrutable Will. This tension may be called "duty". It forces the human being out of dispassionate contemplation of circumstances into the creation of new circumstances by the operation of his choice. Creative activity is inescapable and even by withholding action we exercise choice. The rules upon which we /

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1 e.g. in recent literature both extremes have been expressed - the Freudian as the materialist and a revived interest in Gerald Winstanley the spiritual. See Note 1. **at end.**

2 e.g. Kant. The tension is discussed by Prof. C. C. J. Webb in "Kant's Philosophy of Religion", (Oxford, 1926.)

we base our choice form the subject matter of "ethics" or "morality". There is no real distinction between ethics and morality. The Greek ἔθος and the Latin "mos" refer equally to custom, and it is precisely on the question whether custom refers exclusively to what has as a fact been done or includes in the fact a reference to what "ought" to be done that naturalism or supernaturalism in moral philosophy turns.

In Christian ethics - that is the moral philosophy of faith in Jesus Christ - the "ought" is dogmatically linked with the action of God. The delimitation of permissible action which we human beings call "ought" is the direct "Thou shalt not" of the Decalogue[1] or the positive "Thou shalt" of its summaries in the Old and New Testaments.[2] Moreover, Biblical[3] ethics offers a reason or a sanction for this distinction between the permissible and the possible in human choice, the reason, namely, of the divine Will itself. In short, Christian ethics is an active pattern, rather than a passive philosophy, of conduct. To take up the analogy of the hinge again: the Christian believer, being part of the organism of nature, has also made himself - or been made by his Maker - part of the organism of faith, part of the door and part of the door-post. The door and the door-post can exist independently, but when joined by the /

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1 EXODUS, XX: DEUT., V.

2 DEUT., VI, 5: X, 12: LEV., XIX, 18: MATT., XXII, 37 ff.

3 i.e. ethical thought based upon the Old as well as the New Testament, thus assuming the relevance of the one to the other.

the hinge become a third, functional unity. The divine pattern of conduct which the Christian obeys in his natural surroundings is the hinge joining the divine purpose and human actuality.

There are two main problems involved in Christian ethics, namely, the problem of "nature" and the problem of "revelation". Professor Brunner, in the introductory remarks[1] to the "Divine Imperative" describes their relationship. The very terms "Christian" and "ethics" introduce the dogma of a particular revelation and the assertion of personal responsibility as a universal factor in human history. On the one hand, that is, the Christian asserts that his experience of God in Christ is "true" although it may not be shared by others, and on the other he denies that it is private in the sense of being impossible for non-believers. They, he says, "ought" to know God in Christ. He may admit as a fact of experience that "many are called but few are chosen", but at the same time he is asserting that, in God's purpose, all are called, because all are responsible to their Maker. Thus the Christian uses the term "nature" of human responsibility; but whether he uses it in the same sense as the non-believer is another question.

A greater difficulty arises from the relationship of Christ to the divine Law. Does He abrogate it? If by "abrogate" one wishes to mean to "destroy" there is the best authority for disclaiming /

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[1] Note 2 at end.

disclaiming the term.[1] And yet on the same authority there is a distinct criticism of the established Law.[2] Can the two interpretations stand together? The question can be answered only by distinguishing between the abrogation of particular laws and the maintenance of the underlying principle of law which they profess to maintain. In the interest of equity, for example, it might be claimed necessary to maintain capital punishment, but an equally potent argument, based on precisely the same grounds, can be adduced for its abolition. The Christian interpretation of the Decalogue depends upon the primary question whether the Decalogue is to be regarded as a code of law or as an expression of God's desire for our obedience. A code of law is a human expression, and of course every ideal has to be codified in order to be made actual, in order even to be tested; and Christian obedience would in that sense be a code as much as the laws of Hammurabi were a code. But the obedience of the Christian always refers back to the divine Authority as to an interested Spectator of human action. The danger of human codes is that they may be themselves deified and made absolute.[3]

(ii)

The teaching of the early Reformers about the Decalogue rested /

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1 MATT. V, 17.

2 MATT. V, 21 ff.

3 This was presumably the criticism of Jesus against the Pharisees. It is the criticism that Brunner lays against modern absolutism. "Justice and the Social Order". (1945) pp. 15 ff.

rested upon the urgency of their "faith". By faith a man stood in direct contact with his Maker without priest or church between. Thus in the life of faith the believer referred solely to the Will of his God and not to any edict of the church or any judgment of its ministers. This direct reference was possible only on the assumption that God had given a revelation of His Will apart from the human struggle to interpret it. This revelation was of course to be found in the Bible, which was regarded as self-explanatory, as offering, that is, to the believer, a pattern of obedience. The pattern however was not a code, because it referred to a divine and not a human institution. Thus the early Reformers attempted to avoid the slavery of scribalism and maintain the balance between the eternal law of God and the Spirit Who is its ultimate and only Interpreter.

The main theme of Christian authority may perhaps suitably receive some slight further introduction. To the twentieth century student[1] there is always the doubt that the Reformation is dated, and that its contribution to the vital problems of Christian obedience now is of only academic interest. There can be little doubt that in two respects the Reformers made assumptions which are no longer self-evident. In their passionate desire /

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[1] E.g. Rupert E. Davies, "The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers" (Epworth, 1946) gives this impression. T. S. Eliot in his "Idea of a Christian Society" is also guarded in his praise of classical systems.

desire for civil law and order they spoke in medieval language. Chaos was abhorrent to a civilisation which had a strong memory of its horrors and thus a strong desire for stable government.[1] To-day civilisation is itself so discredited that we seek in personal human values a primary force for reconstruction of social principles which have lost their authority. We therefore conceive toleration to be a greater virtue than any medievalist or Reformer would have allowed. For them individual human nature was subject to the over-ruling principle of "concupiscentia", and was thus not to be trusted. At the same time, the Reformers were children of the Renaissance in their implicit trust in documentary evidence and historical reference. The proofs which they offered in disputation were the "one plain and simple sense"[2] of Scripture backed up by patristic lore from sources earlier than Jerome.[3] That is not evidence that would convince to-day because by an odd reversal of values we have lost our intellectual assurance about truth - as distinct from our casual acceptance of technical dexterity - in almost the same degree as we have revived our faith in individual - as distinct from group - perfectibility.

But the Reformers, with the discerning believers of every age, believed in the relevance of the divine Will to every human circumstance. /

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1 Expressed particularly in Macchiavelli "The prince": Bodin "De Republica" and later Hobbes "Leviathan". See Cambridge Modern History, I, cap. 6.

2 Melanchthon.

3 Jerome had, particularly because of his standard edition of the Scripture (the Vulgate) to a large extent standardised medieval Biblical studies. The Reformation, of course, led to renewed activity in translation e.g. the English Authorised Version.

circumstance. It has been said[1] of Calvin that he held as a "fixed ideal" the relationship of the old and the new Israel. "Under the old dispensation the children of Israel had been the people of God: now in these latter days their mantle had fallen upon Geneva". Every Reformer might be credited with a similar ideal, for their "faith", although primarily a spiritual and moral experience,had an intellectual and social significance too. The medieval idea of history had been that it was done and irrelevant to the present;[2] the world was travelling away from its golden age and could recapture only a reflection of its bliss in the faithful repetition of the Mass. The Reformers in rejecting the Mass rejected more than its pretended oblation. They rejected its historical implication. Reformed worship was not a bodily presence at the performance of a ghostly mystery. It was active participation in a creative relationship with the Deity Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit. History thus came alive because the God of the Israelites was the God of the Reformers and thus what He said once was an important indication of what He might say again. Hence the importance of preaching in Reformed worship.



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1 R. N. Carew Hunt "Calvin's Theory of Church and State", Church Quarterly Review, Vol. CVIII.

2 Robertson Smith, "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," (1892) p. 8 .

A somewhat arbitrary selection of Reformation personalities has been made, suggested by Dr. Warfield's introduction to the American edition of the "Institutes".[1] Calvin, he says, was not the only thinker struggling to formulate the doctrines of Christian faith and conduct. Melanchthon, Zwingli and Farel had all put their hand to the task. Examination of the works mentioned shows that, whatever the point of departure, each writer was feeling after the same end, namely the authority upon which Reformers could repudiate the two extremes of spiritual revolt against the divine Will, the ecclesiastical totalitarianism of the pope and the anarchy of the Anabaptists. Perhaps indeed this agreement of objective is the bond that keeps these diverse arguments under the same denomination of "reformed"; and to illustrate this common interest Luther has been cited in addition, as the fountain of reformed thought, and Bucer as the point where reformed thought had passed from its phase of opposition to its position of political control.

Calvin however is the main personality under review; and rightly so.[2] He was of the second generation of Reformers but in himself grasped the implications of the movement more firmly than perhaps any before or after him. Even in his first edition of the "Institutes"[3] he set out the main issues at stake, and in the later /

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[1] Vol. I, pp. xiv ff.

[2] Warfield, op. cit. So also M.E. Chenevière, "La Pensée politique de Calvin", [Geneva, 1937,] agrees that Calvin's work was unique, over-shadowing all its precursors.

[3] Written in 1534 or 1535, either at Angoulême or at Basle, but before his first visit to Geneva. The first chapter is headed "De Lege, quod Decalogi Explicationem continet".

later editions the doctrines with which he surrounded his first thesis remained subordinate to it. Although he discussed more fully than the others the question of our knowledge of God, for example, he restricted his interest to the central question he had originally posited, namely the proper obedience that we owe to God in Christ. At the other end of the discussion he refers to the impact of Christian obedience upon the natural relationships of Christians with one another and with unbelievers; but he does not offer any definite teaching about the composition of the right state, whether monarchy or otherwise.[1] The main problem is always the obedience of the individual believers.

Something might usefully be added about the main texts that form the basis of the study. Luther's treatise "On Good Works" came into existence from a series of sermons which he preached on the same subject, and which were worked up into a statement of Reformed moral teaching for the eye of the Elector of Saxony. References are from the Weimar edition of his works.[2]

Melanchthon's "Loci Communes" had an even more casual origin. Appointed to the chair of Greek in Wittenberg, he soon fell under the influence of the Reformer, and like Colet earlier in England,[3] lectured upon the Greek New Testament as part of his ordinary course. In 1520 the lectures on ROMANS were published without his consent by some of his students from notes they had made. These lectures - which he called "Lucubratiuncula" - concerned some /

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1 "He preached the divine right of the established order" - Lagarde.

2 Referred to as W. A. [Weimarer Ausgabe.]

3 F. Seebohm, "The Oxford Reformers" (1867).

some common topics of theological science. In 1521, having failed to suppress the unauthorised edition, Melanchthon himself published the first edition of the "Loci Communes" which was a composite work based upon the Lucubratiuncula and other notes on the epistle. The references are from the Corpus Reformatorum.[1]

Farel's "Summaire briefue declaration daucuns lieux fort necessaires" seems to make a reference to Melanchthon's "Loci" in its "very necessary places". The original work published in 1524 is now lost, and the edition of 1537, reprinted in 1552, had not been re-edited until Professor J. S. Baum of Strasburg did so in 1867. It was published by Fick of Geneva, and a partial copy is possessed by New College, Edinburgh. Bucer's "De Regno Christi" is also scarce. It was his last work, written for, and presented to, the young Edward VI in 1550.[2] It was not published in England. In 1557 Bucer's secretary collected his "Scripta Anglicana Omnia" for publication in Basel, and a second edition appeared in 1577. Edinburgh University is fortunate in possessing a copy of both editions. The work has not been translated into English but its importance is marked by the interest of pamphleteers in the 17th and 18th centuries who quote it,[3] and by the translations of particular portions which were made, by Milton for example, and the /

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1 referred to hereafter as "C.R."

2 On the basis of this presentation copy, Edward himself attempted an outline of reform, "Discourse on the Reformation of Abuses".

3 e.g. Bishop Ussher's pamphlet on "The Originall of Bishops and Metropolitans". (See Chapter 7, section ii.)

the summary which Jeremy Collier included in his "Ecclesiastical History" of 1714. The references here are from the second edition of the "Scripta Anglicana".

Calvin is represented mainly by his chapters on the "Moral Law" in the 1559 edition of the "Institutes". As has been said, they can almost be called the core of the work. The first edition, designed to refute both the Romanists and the "turbulent Anabaptists"[1], made the Decalogue the first step in the argument; and in later editions it remained the point to which the theological doctrines of the earlier chapters moved and from which the practical doctrines of church and state emerged. If further evidence of its importance were needed the facts that he wrote a long commentary on the "Harmony of the Pentateuch" a very large part[2] of which is devoted to a harmony of the various preceptual passages under the headings of the Decalogue, and that between 20th March 1555 and 15th July 1556 he preached a series of two hundred sermons[3] on DEUTERONOMY, of which sixteen were specifically concerned with the Decalogue and were later published separately, would surely provide it. It is clear that for Calvin at least, the problems of private and public conduct that were thrown up by the pursuit of Reform not only required treatment on the basis of divine authority but that in the Scripture they had received it. The importance /

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[1] ". . . . Anabaptistes ac turbulentes homines, qui perversis deliriis non Religionem modo sed totum ordinem Politicum convellerent . . ." Preface to Commentary on Psalms.

[2] C.R., XII, pp. 209-729.

[3] Lobstein, "Die Ethik Calvins", (1877) p. 45 (n), gives 20th May as the date of the first sermon.

importance of the Decalogue was thus that it was the epitome of Scriptural revelation about conduct.

(iv)

The argument followed is divided into seven chapters. The first reviews the place of the Decalogue in Judaistic and Christian ethical thought, the object being to show that the Decalogue has always had a strong revival whenever there has been a serious return to personal faith. In other words, the Decalogue is to be regarded not as a human code, not even a human "ideal", but as an ethical actuality to be lived out by believers in a living God. The second and third discuss the particular revival of the 16th century. As Troeltsch says[1], the Reformation movement was a "Church" and not a "Sect" movement. The Reformers did not seek the perfection of selected souls, but the reformation of the Church herself, and they very soon discovered that Church and state were so intermingled that reform of the one meant revolution in the other. The Reformation was a religious and not a political or social movement; but the life of Europe was in its process changed from top to bottom,[2] from the idea of monarchy to the idea of the home. /

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1 Social Teaching of the Christian Churches (E.T. 1931), II, pp. 691 ff. This is a generalisation. The "sect-type" influenced the Reformers also, but their main end was always the achievement of the same total authority as had been sought by the medieval church. The difference was that they sought to achieve it through the influence of those who professed and were willing to practise a dynamic faith.

2 Trevelyan, "English Social History", 99 ff., gives an example, but they could be repeated for other Reformed countries. Certainly Scotland was revolutionised. Graham, "Social Life in Scotland in the 18th Century" (1900) abundantly illustrates the fundamental Calvinism of the national mind. Troeltsch op.cit., p. 694 quotes Harnack ("Dogmengeschichte", III, p. 904,) "that which divided between the cloister and the world in Catholicism the Reformers desired to unite in common labour".

home. The implications were not seen all at once, however, and a distinct evolution can be traced from Luther to Calvin and beyond. The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters discuss the main theme, which is Calvin's doctrine of Christian citizenship. The basis of the argument is the section of the Institutes (INST., 2: 7 and 8) in which Calvin treats the Moral Law. Chapter four refers mainly to INST., 2: 7, paragraphs 1 - 5, that is to say, with the problems of Christian interpretation of Scripture, and of the universal need of man, whether under the Old or the New Covenants, for grace. Chapter five brings the discussion to a more practical issue, referring to paragraphs 6 - 17 of Chapter 7, which concern the three uses of the Law and which thus involve Calvin's idea of Christian justice and the value of personality. Chapter six is a treatment of the Decalogue itself, first under a general survey (2: 8: 1-5) and then under each commandment. Parallel reference is made in this chapter to relevant passages in the Sermons and in the "Harmony" of the Pentateuch. The point which it is desired to make is that Calvin, like the other Reformers, but more consistently, attempted to rear a Christian social system upon the revealed Word of God in Scripture.

Finally, reference is made in chapter seven to Calvin's immediate contemporaries in the larger world beyond Geneva. Bucer in his "De Regno Christi" was painting a canvas for a nation, not a city state. Could he succeed in deriving his principle of right conduct from Scripture, and Scripture alone? Or was it necessary to invoke, as the Monarchomachists invoked, the dangerous principle of the sovereignty of the people?

CHAPTER I

The Decalogue as the basis of Judaistic and Christian Ethics.

(i) The place of the Old Testament in Christian ethics.

(ii) The Decalogue in the Old Testament - a principle rather than a "code".

(iii) The Christian interpretation of the Decalogue.

(iv) The growth of medieval "scribalism".

- Pauline moralism and pagan sacrifice
- Augustine and the division between priest and laity
- the social conditions in Western Europe that favoured the distinction.

(v) The cultivation of the idea of personal responsibility in Christendom.

(vi) "Natural" law and the divine sanction.

(i)

It has already been said in the introductory remarks that "Christian" ethics is a conception with two widely diverging references. Perhaps it is an expression of human ὕβρις that religion and conduct are so frequently kept separate, the gods being placated with ceremonial while man attends to the business of daily life. Dr. Brunner remarks in the introduction to "Revelation and Reason"[1] that this particular order of the terms is unusual even in Christian exposition, and yet it is the correct order where faith in the God and Father of our Lord is a factor to be considered. The first postulate of an ethics that claims to be Scriptural is that the relevance of God shall be maintained not only in worship but equally in conduct.

This dogmatic assumption has two aspects. Firstly, the "ought" of Christian conduct is always the "Thou shalt" of God: secondly, again to quote Brunner,[2] "the law of God sends man out into the world as "the place where he is to prove his obedience to God." Thus Christian conduct is a mean between activism and quietism. A third implication may be derived. The ultimate basis of the "ought" which philosophers may trace to "nature", and from which they may then proceed to deduct a universal system, is identified by the Christian with God's Own Word; consequently when a Christian speaks to a non-Christian about what he - the non-Christian - ought to do, it is still in the Name of God that he speaks. The Will of God for the Christian is totalitarian not only /

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[1] See Note 3 at end.

[2] Mediator (1932 E.T. 1937), p. 475.

only for the man in Christ but for the man who denies Christ.

One might call this point of view a Christian "fiction of belief"[1] in order to emphasise that it is based upon a distinctive principle of faith. Such fictions are common enough in legal thinking; in religious thinking they are sometimes called "myths". The Romans referred all law to a hypothetical twelve tables, and rather remarkably, 17th century lawyers[2] in England built up a hard-headed democratic constitution upon a completely romantic view of Magna Carta. In the same way the Hebrews referred all law to Moses, all poetry to David, and all wisdom to Solomon. Our own bleak rationalism has attacked these myths on the ground that they are historically inaccurate, overlooking sometimes that the fact of the existence of the myths is itself a historical fact worthy of attention. Supposing, for example, that the Decalogue had not been "really" given to Moses on Sinai, but that it evolved out of the desert circumstances of the pilgrimage upon the general lines which governed the Hittite law or the laws of Hammurabi,[3] would that be a sufficient dismissal of the matter? Historically the fact that a group of people accepted them as of God through Moses is itself important, and theologically, if we are to say we believe in the Bible, we are surely bound to give some consideration to its own estimate of itself. As Brunner says, revelation is often discounted by Christian thought itself. Brunner himself, however, seems to fall into the same error. The Decalogue, he says, is a useful /

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1 W. Robertson Smith, op. cit. pp. 384 ff.
2 G. M. Trevelyan, "History of England", (1926), pp. 172: 381.
3 An example of this type of reasoning is Buber's "Moses" (1946).

useful "paradigm" of love;[1] it has a "catechetical"[2] use for Christian faith; in the final issue, apparently, the Christian depends upon a certain immediacy[3] of divine revelation. No doubt the Spirit must guide and direct our actions; but if we are to place such absolute trust upon His interference now, why should His historical utterances be relegated by implication to a secondary place in our faith?

This apparent conflict between the present working of the Spirit and the historical evidence of Scripture is the crux of all Christian theories of ethics, and particularly the thought of Calvin[4] and his Reformation contemporaries, since their problem of authority lay very distinctly between the Scylla of ecclesiastical absolutism and the Charybdis of Anabaptist libertinism. The only safe course for "faith" was in the assumption of a direct relevance of Scripture - that is, the historical dealings of God with His people - to the people of His choice in Jesus Christ. This disillusioned generation may find the Reformers' acceptance of documents at face value somewhat naive,[5] but the description of Calvin as uncritically bound to a mechanical theory[6] of Biblical inspiration is itself misleading. Calvin was not bound in the way that /

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1 Divine Imperative (1932: E.T. 1937), pp. 134 ff.

2 "Justice and the Social Order", pp. 111 ff.

3 "God and Man" (E.T. 1936) pp. 95 ff. See Note 4 at end.

4 e.g. Brunner - "Justice and the Social Order", p. 112, refers to "Luther's assertion, explicitly repeated by Calvin, that the Old Testament law can have no direct meaning for us as a rule of conduct . . . ".

5 Fairbairn in Cambridge Modern History II, p. 357, says "without a document he (Calvin) can decide nothing; he needs a written law or actual custom". The appeal to documents was a Renaissance trait and a necessary corrective to the mere authority of an inspired papal authority.

6 Rupert E. Davies, op. cit., p. 114.

that "fundamentalists" to-day appear to be bound. Compared with medieval interpretation his is rational - that is, it appeals to the common sense of the reader for verification. Nor is he above eschewing what he calls fanciful interpretation of Scriptural references.[1] He could even dismiss some of the Old Testament precepts as set aside because of their merely local significance.[2] Such boldness of interpretation is itself open to question, but it does refute the suggestion of mere mechanism. Calvin was a Christian and therefore tested all Scripture, as we are bidden to do, by the standard of Jesus Christ.[3] It is Christ Who is Sovereign, and therefore what He ordains is to be accepted without question even if such obedience is sometimes also without clear understanding. If Calvin therefore retained the Decalogue in Christian usage it was because, after due sifting, he found it expressed the Will of Christ for His people; and since Calvin did not altogether repudiate reason,[4] it was not to him a sure indication of error that the Decalogue, the revealed Will of God, should be intelligible to human reason. Quite simply, the Decalogue was an indication that God's Will /

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1 References will be found hereafter. A notable example is his refusal to discuss the Old Testament tabernacle in too elaborate typology.

2 "E.g. "Consilia" CR XXXVIIIa, 246. "La loy de Moyse est politique laquelle ne nous astraint point plus oultre que porte equite et la raison d'humanite." Significantly, this remark applies to the problem of usury, about which Calvin was never very happy.

3 e.g. Ibid, 154, "du nom de Dieu et son invocation". - "Quant nous parlons de l'Escriture il fault distinguer entre le vieil Testament et le nouveau, car quant est de la loy et des Prophetes: combien que le tout sort procede de Iesus Christ en tant qu'il a tousiours este. l'Ange souverain et principal ambassadeur par lequel Dieu s'est communiqué aux hommes," etc. So that whoever appears to speak - Moses or David, for example, - actually it is God Himself.

4 As an instrument of understanding permitted to sinful humanity by the general grace of God. Reason of course in no sense can be said to "save" us.

Will for mankind had always been the same,[1] that indeed it was what made man man and nothing else.[2] He thus did not altogether share with modern Calvinists the requirement of irrationality in the divine revelation.[3]

These problems, and particularly the problem of the relationship between the universal authority of the divine Will and the particularisation of that Will in Jesus Christ, will recur in later discussion. For the moment the question is to be pursued how far Calvin might be considered justified by Biblical tradition in seeking this particular interpretation of the Decalogue. Is it true, for example, as Calvin says it is,[4] that the Decalogue was part of the Covenant to the Israelites, leading them on to Christ? Or was it merely the law of Sinai, a law given once and only by a stretch of interpretation made the basis of subsequent law?[5] Again, did Jesus set the Decalogue aside in favour of some other principle of conduct? /

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1 e.g. INST. 4:20:15. The Moral Law is the true and eternal rule of righteousness prescribed to the men of all nations and all time who would frame their life agreeably to the will of God. The reference "INST" is to the 1559 edition.

2 E.g. INST. 1:15:1. We cannot know God without knowing man also. In the 1536 edition the opening words are "Summa fere sacrae doctrinae duabus his partibus constat: Cognitione Dei ac nostri" This chapter is headed, "De Lege".

3 D. M. Baillie "God was in Christ" (1947) discusses the problem of modern radical theology; see pp. 22:37:49, etc.

4 INST. 2:7:1 ff. Wilhelm Niesel, "Die Theologie Calvins (1938) lays considerable emphasis upon the view of the law as a "Bundesgesetz" "[redacted]", 86 ff. He quotes further examples from Calvin's works.

5 So that Moses would be like Hammurabi, what Niesel calls "the creator of a so-called religion of law" (der Schopfer einer sogenannten Gesetzesreligion). On the contrary, Moses was "the prophet of the covenant of God" (der Prophet des Bundesgottes, der Künder Seiner Barmherzigkeit und Treue) ibid,88. Compare Wilhelm Vischer, "Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments", I (1935) pp. 112 ff.

conduct? And again, is it justifiable to say, as is sometimes said,[1] that Christendom - that is the Christian faith of North West Europe - simply identified the revealed Law of God with the lex naturae of the Stoics? These questions must be answered if a right estimate is to be made of the interpretations which Calvin offered are to be correctly estimated.

(ii)

For the Hebrews the Decalogue was the Law par excellence, the Law of Sinai, the moral badge, as circumcision was the physical badge, of God's covenant with them. There is no other suggestion in the Old Testament; and when the prophets condemn the "nations" for their breach of the divine commandment,[2] it is not on the grounds that they, the nations, belonged to the "general traditions of south west Asia",[3] but on the ground that Jehovah had planted His Law before their eyes also. The point at issue therefore is whether the Hebrews may be justly said to have regarded the Decalogue as something more permanent than a mere code of law, something to which they could return as to a first principle when particular codes became outworn by circumstance or inadequate for the /

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1 This view has been taken by Troeltsch, op. cit. I, pp 150 ff, 238-9: 390, etc. and repeated, for example, by N. Micklem "Theology and Politics", pp. 60 ff: R. H. Murray, "History of political science from Plato to the Present", p. 144. Doumergue, in an article "Calvin - Epigone or Creator?" contributed to the symposium "Calvin and the Reformation" (1909) p. 19, questions this view.

2 E.g. AMOS, caps. I - III.

3 The sort of description a scientific mind might offer.

the restraint of "wrong" practice, a regulative principle, in short, which could remain regulative because expressive of unchanging revelation.

The first point to be made is that the Decalogue was regarded as having been "written" by the finger of God upon tables of stone.[1] Legislation for the Israelites was, like all primitive legislation, built up of oral judgments upon particular cases given either by the ancients from their tribal memory or else by a man of God making his direct interpretation of the Will of God from his physical evidence through dreams or some other accepted means. Such is the case of Zelophahad's daughters,[2] which, incidentally has been described[3] as an example in modern law of the Christian reference to divine principle. The authority in this particular case was two-fold. The judge - and he might have been prophet or priest, judge or king - spoke in the Name of God as his Inspirer, but he spoke also in the name of tradition. In other words, the judgment given directly for this particular case was an expression of a principle recognisable in the Decalogue, namely the paternal honour. In this sense the Decalogue stands at the base of all the codes in the Old Testament. Each one rested its authority upon its superior interpretation of the revealed Will of God. Thus the earlier codes which permitted a diversity of religious centres were /

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1 DEUT. IV. 13 : V. 22 : IX. 10 : X. 1 - 4. EX. XXXI. 18 : XXXII. 16 : XXXIV. 1 : 28. Compare the reference in LUKE XI. 20 to the finger of Christ as the medium of divine power.

2 NUMBERS XXXVI. Robertson Smith, op. cit., 335 ff, gives some other illustrations.

3 Lord MacMillan "Law and Religion", a paper delivered to the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, 1934.

were set aside by Josiah[1] because they allowed in their letter misunderstandings and abuses of the divine Will. Later reformations worked on the same principle. Ezra, for example, associated his reforms with a revived emphasis on the feast of tabernacles which thereafter became associated with the reading of the Law. There is even traceable in the prophets[2] a tendency to distinguish between the "moral" and the "ceremonial" implications of the Law as if the Decalogue could be isolated as the true pattern of the divine Will, sacrifice being its symbolism. It was this spiritual interpretation which John[3] the Baptist and Paul emphasised as the true Messianic interpretation. Jesus Himself made a different emphasis. All human interpretations depended upon the breakdown of the divine-human harmony which made true obedience an impossibility. Conscious of mediating the spirit of forgiveness, He spoke not of the letter of the Law which the Pharisees were in danger of making a talisman, and not of the spirit of the Law as it must appear to human insight, namely as condemnation, but of the spirit of the Law as the man in Christ could see it.[4]

The problem for Christian theology is to decide whether Jesus, in opening up the new point of view, was in fact setting aside the Decalogue /

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1 T. H. Robinson "A History of Israel" (1932) I, pp. 418 ff.
2 AMOS II, 10, V, 25. MICAH VI, 8. JER. VII, 21 ff.
3 ST. MATT. III, 7 ff. Rom. III, 28.
4 Hence an ethics which was "impossible" and yet "relevant", as Niebuhr brings out in "Interpretation of Christian Ethics" (1936).

Decalogue altogether. In other words, does the Law in any sense save, or does it merely condemn? The latter alternative may be ignored as wholly contrary to Scripture; but it might be argued that the Law was Biblically intended simply to beat sinful man to his knees in order that, when there, he may turn for salvation to Christ and enter upon a new way of life, the life of the Spirit, not of the Law. This is not quite Calvin's view.[1] Both because he insisted that what God revealed cannot simply be set aside, even by Christ - for Christ in God was at the creation of the earth - and also because he rejected the idea of Christian perfectionism, he held that the basis of Christian conduct[2] no less than that of the "Fathers" of the Old Testament, was equally to be taken as the Law revealed once for all in Scripture.[3]

Robertson Smith's article on the "Decalogue" in the famous 1877 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica raised the critical issue of its identity. In contradiction to the hitherto current view that the tables of stone contained the Decalogue as we know it, /

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[1] The purpose of the Law was, of course, to produce godly despair (INST. 2:7:8). But Calvin emphasises (a) that the Law was Moral Truth, i.e. part of the universe to which man must conform if he is to be other than mad (INST. 1:3:3 "The worship of God is . . . the only thing which renders men superior to brutes . . ."") and (b) that Christ was in the Law and not simply opposed to it. INST. 2:7, 1-2).

[2] e.g. "Consilia" C.R. XXXVIIIa, 200 " . . . Parquoy il est à conclurre que frère Matthieu Orris banissant la Loy des dix parolles de l'eglise christienne blaspheme trop villainement contre Dieu, qui en est lautheur, foullant aux pieds son authorité!"

[3] Ibid. "Quant l'Escriture dict, que les Chrestiens sont afranchis de la servitude de la Loy, cela s'entend avec les conditions et qualitey qui y estoient apposées, à ce qu'elle ne nous tienne plus en sa rigueur pour nous condamner.
But " . . . Dieu a donné sa Loy pour gouverner noz ames".

it, he pointed out at least two other possible bodies of contents.[1] Even in ancient Israel therefore there seems to have been a difference of opinion about the identity of the primary Law. His own interpretation of the origin of Israelite law is that it grew up by the accumulation of cases decided by the judges of each generation, but ultimately deriving from the ordinary bedouin principles of retaliation and compensation. In so far as the question is one of legal mechanics, this view may be assumed in preference to the rigid doctrine of revelation which he was contesting. It may also be pointed out that analysis of Calvin's treatment of the Decalogue shows a clear division into three parts, the constitutional part being concerned with the practical issues of life, family and property. But it is incorrect to assume, even allowing for the assertion that the Decalogue was not the only document written upon tables of stone, that when the judges judged, they referred to a principle of righteousness which was simply bedouin custom. In their case, custom was sanctioned by the living God. It is misleading to trace the Law back to natural law without taking account of the factor of revelation. The Law would certainly not be relevant to human situations were it not based upon the principles of human existence;[2] but the argument which stops at that statement is mere /

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[1] Robertson Smith op. cit., p. 335. Art. "Decalogue in Ency Brit. 1877. See also articles "Decalogue" by W. P. Paterson (Hastings Dictionary of the Bible): L. W. Batten, (Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics).

[2] Such as family, state, agriculture, trade etc.

mere tautology; it has not begun to answer the question why this Law became so influential in human affairs; why, in fact, it has been regarded as a religious as well as an ethical ultimate by both Jews and Christians.

Two enlightening examples of similar thinking may be culled from medieval Christendom. Trevelyan[1] suggests that the characteristic loyalty of man to master, together with the characteristic equalitarianism that are the best features of Western culture, depend partly upon the Homeric virtues of the Germanic tribes. Glubb Pasha[2] makes a more specific claim for bedouin hospitality as the basis of medieval "chivalry". But Christendom modified these principles, and others taken from other sources,[3] into a system conformable with Christian faith. This same factor of "faith" has to be assumed by Christian theologians as a dogma when they are discussing the Decalogue. It may be true that, as Dr. Rankin says,[4] the makers of the Midrashim felt free to offer the most untrammelled interpretations of Holy Writ, provided only that the central unity of God were observed, but it would hardly be true to say that[5] "things which, if they were not written in the Law would on grounds of reason have to be written", unless the grounds of reason were firmly /

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[1] History of England 67-8.

[2] J. B. Glubb, "The Story of the Arab Legion" (1948)

[3] and notably the Aristolelian teachings which St. Thomas built into his "Summa". Etienne Gilsen, "Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages", (1939) pp. 38 ff.

[4] Dr. O. S. Rankin, in an unpublished paper, "The Interpretation of the Old Testament in the history of Judaism and of the Church".

[5] G. F. Moore, "Judaism" II (1927) pp. 6 ff.

firmly identified with the Word of God itself. The argument has, in short, worked itself back to the two principles originally stated, that the Decalogue in Christian ethics must be regarded as the contact of faith with practical issues and at the same time the contact of conduct with revelation.

(iii)

Two extremes of wrong interpretation have emerged, the identity on the one hand, of revelation with a fixed, mechanical principle, and the identity on the other of revelation with human reason. The alternatives are obviously directed against one another. "Literalism" depends upon a justified distrust of human nature as a moral force, and "rationalism" upon the equally justifiable concern to find an expression of faith in the creative activity of daily conduct. Circumstances foster one or other principle. For example, the scribes, whatever the freedom of their Midrashim, nevertheless felt constrained to close the Canon. Their motive might justly be ascribed to a sense of constraint. Israel was no longer in control of her own affairs, and at the same time was threatened by materialistic Hellenism. It is not, therefore, surprising that she lost faith in her ability to mould the nations and turned in upon her own traditions, a Church nourished by the revealed truth of its principles, not a state or empire creating new expressions of justice.[1] In such circumstances the Law became

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[1] This remark is based upon the obvious division of opinion between the Davidic revival expressed in the term "belovedSon" (PS. II) and the role of the Suffering Servant. Neither, of course, abandons the hope that by one or other means God will vindicate Himself among the nations. That is to say, the one is not pessimism as distinct from the optimism of the other, unless the pessimism is restricted to the means of the Divine vindication.

a dead symbol of a creative past. It could be true that "the Torah[1] was the foundation of all Jewish ethical reading", its observance "per se effective in establishing and maintaining a right relationship between God and man", "the means of attaining eternal life", "the medium, and its study of the condition of immortality"; the Torah could be described even in terms of personality; yet in fact the Law of God could become a dead letter, dead because identified with a historical, ideal situation, and a letter instead of a continuing spiritual reality. If new treasures were not continually found in the Law[2] it was a code in the worst sense, being not only archaic but in itself sanctified. Saul of Tarsus and the rich young ruler were both led away into the error of imagining that obedience to the Decalogue meant obedience to its literal requirements, and that such obedience should bring some magic transformation of their life.

The Christian solution to the spiritual impasse of scribalism was by a re-invocation of the Holy Spirit's energies. While the Pharisees were tithing mint and rue and cummin, and the more liberal-minded were distinguishing between the revealed Law and the reason of men, Jesus was boldly re-interpreting the Decalogue with the prophetic authority, "I say unto you". It is an under-statement to limit /

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[1] W. O. E. Oesterley, The Jewish Doctrine of Mediation (1910) pp.68-9.

[2] Perhaps this is what Jesus meant when, despite His frequent attacks on Scribalism, He nevertheless seems to respect the careful scribe. (Matt. XV, 52). Dr. T. W. Manson ["Mission and Message of Jesus" (1937) pp. 490-1] doubts however whether this balance can be maintained apart from the Evangelist's own view.

limit the work of Christ to an expression of [1] "the ethical teaching of Judaism . . . in terms of permanent worth" and a relegation of "its ritual and ceremonial features to a relatively insignificant position". The synagogue had already made this change in Judaism, using the Shema and the Decalogue to represent the spiritual,[2] and the prayers of the sacrifice, the sacrificial aspects of Hebrew tradition.[3] What Jesus offered was a spirit of life. His disciples were to be no longer servants, but friends,[4] knowing the counsel of their Master. There is no suggestion that they were brought under a different Law, whether spiritual or sacrificial. The sacrificial Law itself was for the Christian still relevant; only it was fulfilled in the perfect sacrifice of Christ Himself.[5] The Law in fact may be described as a revelation in the sense that it is a disclosure of the nature of God Himself, and not merely the imposition which He is pleased to lay upon mankind. The Christian interpretation of this situation would be that the man in Christ knows that there is no inevitable separation of man from God. He can, as it were, pass through the veil into the divine Presence. The veil, however, remains for those not in Christ, and it is surely this /

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1 B. H. Branscomb, "Jesus and the Law of Moses" (1930) p. 270.

2 Liturgy and Worship, 63: article, "Synagogue Worship in the 1st century" by Paul P. Levertoff.

3 Ibid, 51: article, "Worship in the Old Testament" by W. O. E. Oesterley.

4 ST. JOHN, XV, 15.

5 Hence the importance of HEBREWS, particularly for Reformation doctrine, e.g. Calvin "Consilia" C.R. XXXVIIIa, 200 ". . . quant l'Ecriture dict que la Loy a prins fin à la venue de Jesus Christ, cela s'entend des ceremonies: comme c'est une doctrine si claire qu'elle est tournée quasi en proverbe: Que la Loy moralle dure à jamais, combien que la loy ceremonielle soit abolie.

this alternation between faith in Christ and knowledge of sin that makes the double voice of Paul about the Law.[1] Because of the law - that is the fact - of sin in my members, I am outside the veil, knowing the Law only as a divine imposition, but not yet aware that there is any access to the Almighty. The only hope in such self knowledge is oblivion. But so long as I cling by faith to my Saviour I am on the inner side of the veil, still under the Law, but under the Law on the same side as, and under the power of, the living God. In short, Jesus replaced a nation which was politically reduced to a church, with a church that was to go out and conquer the world for a spiritual Kingdom.[2]

(iv)

The Pauline joy of salvation did not remain in the Church as a permanent characteristic. The Christendom which the Protestant Reformation transformed was a second period of scribalism. The search for one plain and simple sense of Scripture in place of the medieval four-fold interpretation was a search for a living spirit of obedience to replace the idea of Christian obedience which the Church had misappropriated.

What had happened to Christian liberty? The permanence of the Pauline letters in the New Testament Canon is a measure of his triumph over the Judaising influences which they mention. It is also a measure of the dependence of the Christian faith upon the Jewish /

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[1] See note 5 at end.

[2] A. R. Vidler, "The Orb and the Cross", (1945) p. 11.

Jewish tradition. Even if all Paul's converts were not first Jews or Gentile "God-fearers",[1] no one could hope to reach an adequate understanding of his teaching without constant reference to the Old Testament.[2] Perhaps that reference belongs to the Christian faith itself, and is not only a Pauline trait; Marcionism did not triumph. Even in number and distribution the influence of Old Testament Christianity was wider than one might at first think. There is evidence of the Minim in Rome for example.[3] Moreover, the influence of Paulinism upon the synagogue itself was profound. Some scholars say that the synagogue liturgy was modified in order that any Pauline interpretations might be eradicated and crypto-Christians exposed.[4] The repetition of the Decalogue and the Shema was dropped for these "anti-Christian reasons".

But while Judaism was being modified by Christianity, the Church was being modified by the world. Perhaps the tensions involved in the Pauline mysticism were too exacting for the Apostolic Fathers. They fell under the influence of current non-Christian influences, both Judaistic and Hellenistic, to the extent of re-interpreting the Gospel as a new Law, a higher morality than that of the "world" perhaps, but nevertheless a law which was a burden to be borne as the Law was a burden to the Pharisee, with all the consequent /

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1 σεβομενοι ACTS XIII, 43.

2 So that "Barnabas" can deny to the Jews all right to the Old Testament. The "new Israel" were the true heirs of its promises - see "Liturgy and Worship", pp. 67-69.

3 Ibid, p. 68. Article "Synagogue worship in the 1st century". The reference is to a note quoting MIDRASH, Ex. R. 30.

4 Ibid, pp. 69:73:75, quoting G. Kittel "Rabbinica", and P.P.Levertoff "St Paul in Jewish Thought".

consequent danger of pride in meritorious obedience.[1] The salvation which for Paul had been the joy of the Lord,[2] sheer fellowship with the risen Christ[3] and partnership in His redeeming obedience,[4] became a mere enabling power for the achievement of personal righteousness.

The origin of medieval scribalism may thus be traced to a negative and a positive cause. The negative cause arose largely from circumstances. According to a student of missions,[5] the missionary who preaches a doctrine of free grace without first making reference to the need for obedience, will produce one of two undesirable results. Either his converts will establish the Gospel as a system of Law, or else they will fall into a sickly sentimentality. The best primer for Gospel teaching, he says, is a thorough grounding in the precepts of the Decalogue. Thus, in a situation such as Livingstone reported amongst the Bantus[6] - who showed a clear understanding of at least the second table - or in a situation where there appears to be no moral sense at all, there is or must be created the moral need which the Gospel exists to meet. This method, incidentally, was being used by Jesuit missionaries[7] in the time /

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1 T. F. Torrance, "The doctrine of grace in the Apostolic Fathers"(1948) p. 134.

2 e.g. ROM., XIV, 17. GAL., V, 22; PHIL., I, 4: IV, 1, etc.

3 e.g. EPH., III, 1 ff. Presumably this fellowship is implied also in the apostle's reference to a (private?) "word of the Lord". I THESS., IV, 15.

4 COL. I, 24.

5 Godfrey E. Philips, "The Old Testament in the World Church", (1942) pp. 7: 42.

6 N. Micklem, op. cit., pp. 56 ff.

7 e.g. St. Francis Saviour - see "Life of St. Francis Saviour" by Edith Anne Stewart (1917).

time of Calvin, and had indeed been used by the missionaries to the West in earlier centuries. But, by the time Christianity ~~did~~ reached the pagan West, it had already taken on sacramental references and political ambitions. What Paul had taught, therefore, as primarily a personal faith had become also - inevitably perhaps - a political and social creed ~~also~~ in the mouths of such missionaries as Augustine of Canterbury. The Lord's Prayer and the Decalogue were no doubt taught and taught even in the vernacular, but they were sharply distinguished from the Mass itself. The priest, brought in by the monarch and standing in the court as a scribe and adviser, could hardly help being more concerned with the conversion of society rather than with the conversion of individuals or the mere witness of his faith independent of society. Augustine of Canterbury was chosen as the example to be quoted because in England his influence finally met and conquered the other at Whitby.[1] The pattern of Church life in Christendom was thus early stamped as an order "of this world" and indeed claiming dominion in it.

The positive and the important cause of the medieval error was the readmittance, in the first place, of the idea of physical sacrifice into the Christian mystery. The appeal to current sacrifice as a "kind of Old Testament"[2] for the pagan converts inevitably reintroduced the veil of the Temple which had been rent in twain. However one might distinguish the man from the office, the fact that /

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[1] A. R. MacEwan, "A History of the Church in Scotland" (1913) Vidler, op. cit., Chapter I passim.

[2] Liturgy and Worship, p. 96: article "The Eucharist in East and West" Frank Gavin.

that an action such as the performance of sacrifice became associated with the fellowship of the Lord's Table inevitably canalised the means of grace into the hands of the performers of the ritual. It may be admitted that the error was never absolute or unchallenged, and it may also be admitted that it was understandable. At the very lowest level of interpretation, the Lord's Supper commemorated an act of sacrifice which could be homiletically interpreted in terms of an actual practice of sacrifice in the Old Testament. For the pagan convert especially, therefore both the question, "Who was to officiate?"[1] and the personal sacrifice of penitence, thanksgiving, witness, generosity to the needy, and so on tended to recreate the atmosphere of the temple which he had left. Meanwhile, the Church in its struggle for existence in the midst of Hellenistic culture, was trying to express the Christian doctrines in universal terms. The difficulty, as Paul had already found, was to do so without denying the particularity of the Christian revelation. Augustine, the greatest Christian thinker since the apostle himself, succeeded, according to Karl Adam[2] by "ascribing to the Eucharistic Flesh an independent value apart from the res sacramenti, the Spirit". In short, the memory of what had been done once for all was to be replaced by something which was done often. As Barth,[3] commenting upon the trust which the Reformers placed in Augustine, remarks, he himself placed his hopes of salvation upon the action of an institution, not /

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[1] Ibid, pp. 80 ff.

[2] "Die Eucharistielehre des hl. Augustin" (1908) p. 163.

[3] Barth, "Nein" - E. T. "Natural Theology" p. 101.

not upon a personal response to God.

Whatever the actual history of the error, the Reformation assumes its existence. When Cranmer spoke of the young Edward as a "second Josiah"[1] he implied that the Church which Edward was called upon to purge was fallen into the paganism of Josiah's Judah. Luther's analysis of the error was in terms of "oblation"[2] and if one is to draw any conclusions about medieval Romanism from contemporary apologetic, the very essence of the Mass is that very act of oblation made by the priest for the people.[3] "The sacrifice of Calvary and the Mass are the same sacrifice, only the manner in which they are offered is different. On Calvary our Lord's Blood was really shed and He really died: in the Mass His Blood which is really present, appears to be shed, and His death represented". The connection between actuality and repetition depends upon the words of consecration. The part of the people is adoration.

The condition which encouraged this ecclesiastical scribalism in Christendom was the power, political as well as spiritual, which the Church controlled.

The domination by the Church of Western Christendom is not difficult to explain. Like the African continent in recent times, the regions beyond the frontiers of Rome were given over to civilisations hundreds of years behind the society within the frontiers. As in our own times, too, the bearers of the higher culture were, at first /

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1 at his coronation.

2 "Everything that signifies oblation is to be repudiated" quoted in "Liturgy and Worship" p. 140.

3 "A Short Introduction on the Holy Mass" published by the "Catholic Truth Society".

first, missionaries of the Cross of Jesus Christ.[1] It is not therefore surprising that the subtle distinctions of the New Testament were not altogether understood by the Germanic warrior chiefs. Christianity to them was associated with the culture of Rome, and the Christian priest was the bearer of intellectual, and therefore political, power. If the emphasis upon the individual was obscured in the churches of the Roman Empire by the transformation of that Empire into a Christian order, how much more was it obscured by the pathetic loyalty of the Germanic chiefs to the mere idea of Rome which they came to protect.[2] Christ Himself to them was Romanised,[3] and His obedience therefore an imposition foreign to the understanding of life that they accepted as natural. The terms of the laws of Ine, for example, certainly provide for an observance of "Christian" obedience, but with sanctions which plainly show that its meaning was little understood. Christian baptism, abstention from labour on the Lord's day, and the sanctuary of the Church were the badge of the new world of opportunity, and were imposed by force upon the Homeric ethical codes of "the gallant thegns of the North". There grew up, therefore, a double standard of morality. Loyalty to one's lord, readiness to meet death in battle, courage, magnanimity when in power, were distinguished as natural decency from Christian faith./

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[1] The opinion is advanced by R. H. Tawney and others. See "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (1926), pp. 34 ff.

[2] Bryce, "Holy Roman Empire", e.g. pp. 17 ff. (1864).

[3] Trevelyan, op. cit., 66 note.

faith. "Anglo-Saxon poetry, like much medieval and modern poetry, is sincerely Christian when religion is specifically mentioned, but is pagan in tradition and pure human in feeling.[1] This is not altogether a fair estimate of either the age or the faith. It ignores the genuine attempts to express the Personality and the work of Christ in native terms that were made both in art and in religious practice, and which were stultified by the desire for universal obedience to Rome, but it does indicate the real division between layman and priest that held in the middle age. Not until the Protestant reformation in Europe did the native genius[2] achieve the expression of a Christian faith truly natural to itself and its conditions of life.

(v)

The Decalogue played a large part in the fostering and final expression of this genius.[3] "From the ninth century onwards was developed on this (i.e. the northern) side of the Alps and Pyrenees... the vernacular office of the "Prone." This consisted of all or some of these items: bidding and intercessions for living and dead ..... a general confession, and absolution, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue, each with exposition and admonition". This tradition was especially strong in England[4] where the teaching of the Creed /

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[1] Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 67 ff.

[2] K. Latourette, "History of the Expansion of Christianity" (1940) III, 429.

[3] "Lit. and Worship", 139-144, article "History of the Book of Common Prayer down to 1662" - Brightman and Mackenzie.

[4] Ibid. But not only in England. Latourette, op. cit., 378 indicates that the concern of the Church for lay instruction was general.

Creed and Lord's Prayer was repeatedly enforced from the Council of Cloveshoe (747) onwards: Peckham's Constitution, "Ignorantia Sacerdotum" (1281) required also the teaching of the Decalogue. Wordsworth and Littlehales, in their "Old Service book of the English Church"[1] mention also the existence of "very numerous treatises in prose and verse, and other sermon helps" designed to clarify the teaching given to the laity, especially mentioning the "Hamus Charitatis" or "Angle-book of Love" which in its 1491 edition included four sermons on the principal ways by which man may attain to the knowledge of God, namely, knowledge of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and Decalogue, the sacraments, "dedes of mercy" and the various parts of penance. Thus was built up what Dean Perry[2] ascribes to Englishmen "a natural instinct for duty". Significantly, however, the Church kept such instruction distinct from the Mass, so that the "good life" of the layman was something other than the "good life" of the religious. Luther complained[3] that his youthful idea of salvation had been formed by the picture of the "heavenly vessel" manned entirely by priests and monks, who threw out life-lines to the struggling laity, the obvious conclusion being that only the clergy were living the truly good life. This implication had for long enough been denied both by the patent scandals of clerical life and also by the common sense of an emerging Western Europe. Chaucer in England /

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[1] pp. 285-6.
[2] "The Scottish Liturgy"(1929) pp. 88-9.
[3] J. M. Lindsay, "History of the Reformation" (1907), I, p. 198.

England poured scorn upon the ~~Canterbury~~ contemporary clergy, with the exception of the selfless parish priest, and significantly appeals beyond the sanctity of any ordination to the standard of "Cristes lore"[1] as the absolute standard of the truly good life. Such a view is of course itself capable of sentimentality. Luther's description[2] of the German peasant as "upright, simple-minded, reflective, and intelligent. . . . skilled in Bible lore, and even in Church history, and knowing as much of Christian doctrine as 'three priests and more'" is pure romance and in fact received a terrible blow at the Peasants' revolt, but it indicates the natural root of the Reformation in Christendom. Too often the movement is described as a sort of imposition upon an ideally unified Christian society of hypocritical creeds masking secular ideals such as national or commercial ambition.[3] The fact rather is that the Reformation had not only religious antecedents in such movements as those of Wyclif and Hus, and intellectual impulse in the humanist denunciations of Chaucer and Erasmus and political preparation in the silent growth of Roman legal influence, but also a condition without which no revolution can ever be decisive, the spiritual longings of the nameless multitudes. Such longings existed everywhere in Europe, notably in England and in Picardy, the home of Calvin. Perhaps, like Nicholas of Cusa, men desired reformation not re-formation of the Church, but their disgust at the expressions of the medieval faith undoubtedly led to a criticism of the very nature of that faith.[4]

Von /

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[1] Prologue l. 527, cf. the "Personne's Tale" with its assertion "humble folk been Cristes freendes" para. 65.

[2] Lindsay, op. cit., I, p. 302.

[3] Tawney, op. cit., p. 87.

[4] This kind of argument is found in Calvin's criticism of the Church: See below pp. 182 ff.

Von Hugel complained[1] of the Lutherans that they were too "brainy" in their conceptions, that they were more Pauline than Paul. If by "brainy" he meant that the Reformers were conscious of pursuing an absolute end called "Truth" he was correct in his judgment. The Reformers believed that they were breaking through ecclesiastical accretions and were teaching the pure Gospel, that is to say, the Pauline Gospel of "faith" as distinct from a pseudo-Petrine Gospel of good works.[2] They opposed, in other words, the medieval principle of priesthood with a principle of disciplined personal belief. Augustine had spoken of the Decalogue lyrically,[3] - "that psaltery of ten strings, Thy Ten Commandments, O God, most high and most sweet". Hans Luther, Martin's father, took a more practical view.[4] At the public dinner to celebrate the entrance of the young Martin into the Augustinian monastery of Erfurt, he replied to his son's eloquent apologia "even in the presence of the doctors, masters and other ecclesiastics at table" with the blunt question, "Have you not read in Scripture that one shall honour one's father and mother?" Hans was not a Protestant, and his son's later inclinations away from the Church were as vexatious as his earlier monastic aspirations; his /

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[1] "Essays and Addresses", ii, pp. 97-99. In this connection Barth's denunciation of Brunner in "Nein" is significantly written at a window on the Monte Pincio in Rome where he could see the Vatican "over there". The weakness to which Brunner is open, he says, is just that his opposition to Rome is not absolute. "Natural Theology" pp. 95: 99.

[2] Calvin relegated Peter to the Roman tradition, remembering no doubt his Judaising tendencies. But Paul was "our" apostle. INST. 4:16:5

[3] Confessions III, 8.

[4] James Mackinnon "Luther and the Reformation", (1925), I, pp. 48-9.

his criticism of the Church absolutism, therefore, and the basis upon which he rested it, is all the more significant of the awakening consciousness of Christendom.

The absolute which the Reformers sought, then, the "faith" about which they spoke so much, was a personal relationship between the individual and his Maker. Modern Calvinists[1] find it necessary to defend the early Reformers against the charge of stultifying Biblicism, and Choisy can pass the unsympathetic criticism that Geneva was not a theocracy so much as a "bibliocracy"[2], corresponding to the dead scribalism of the medieval Church and the later "orthodox" Protestantism. Trevelyan's description of the new England is better evidence of the true nature of Reform.[3] There was an exaltation of the married state and a dedication of business life, "in reaction against the medieval doctrine that the true life of religion was celibacy and monastic separation from the world: . . . the religious home was the Protestant ideal, with family prayers and private Bible reading in addition to the service and sacraments of the Church." The medieval division of society into religious and lay was ended. The family, at morning and evening prayer, did what the monk and priest had been set apart to do as a profession. The work of prayer and the work of the world were performed by the same persons, and justified /

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[1] e.g. Brunner "Philosophy of Religion" especially pp. 31 ff.

[2] Choisy, "La théocratie à Genève au temps de Calvin", (1897) pp. 261: 277. Troeltsch used the same phrase in his lecture, "Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für Enstehung des modernen Welt" (1906) p. 52.

[3] "English Social History" pp. 127: 188.

justified by the same faith.[1] The Counter-Reformation itself was influenced by the new emphasis upon personal faith.[2] "Since the 16th century . . . the Roman Catholic has been able to 'hear' or 'assist' at Mass in various ways. He can use the opportunity to meditate on the mystery of the Rosary, to pray in his own words, to follow the service itself in his private prayers, or to occupy himself with other private or corporate acts of devotion".

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Mention has been made of two possibilities of wrong interpretation in Christian ethics. The first, what has been called "scribalism", has been discussed, and one need add only this, that it was sincerely, if mistakenly, religious in intention, whether in Judaism or in Christianity. The other error is "rationalism", the acceptance of human reason as the basis of right conduct. There were two possible sources of this self-dependence in European thought, namely the natural virtues of the Germanic clans, and the influence of Stoicism. The Germanic founders of modern Europe had some definite problems to solve and some definite equipment with which to do so. Their military problem of security against invasion from Slav and Arabic sources affected the life of every component nation in Christendom,[3] but particularly the marcher states from the Mediterranean /

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1 So Luther in the "Treatise on Christian Liberty" - "a Christian man is perfectly free, lord of all, subject to none" - but at the same time "a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all".

2 Liturgy and Worship, p. 126. Article "Eucharist in East and West".

3 Sir Frederick Pollock, "History of the Science of Politics", (1890) pp. 47 ff.

Mediterranean to the Baltic, whose state of alertness required[1] a greater degree of centralised authority than existed, for example, in England. Particularly after the enforced peace and the guaranteed security of the Norman ~~invasions~~ conquest, England developed the equalitarian aspect of the original clan kinship, and fostered the tradition of consent in government.[2]

The culture of Greece and Rome encouraged a theoretical interest in government, particularly useful when there arose a practical interest in its cultivation. The political claims of the Church, based upon her authority as the guardian of the divine Law and the transmitter of culture, aroused in the growing states an opposition which sought expression in such terms as could invoke authority above these absolute ecclesiastical claims. This authority was found in the ethics of Stoicism and ~~the laws of Rome~~ in Roman Law. Its potency lay in their antiquity and in their Classical reference. And certainly there was in Roman law a basis for controverting the claims of the Church; for the imperial tradition of pagan Rome gave the secular ruler the undoubted grasp of at least one key, and it was only by false documents[3] that the church laid claim to it when the collapse of imperial /

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[1] Even in Reformation times there was a constant fear of Turkish invasion. Lindsay describes it as "always before their eyes". Vienna had been successfully defended in 1529, but in 1545 Soliman captured Buda.

[2] Doumergue, op. cit., recalls Montesqudeu's comment ("Esprit des Lois" XX, 7) that "they are the people of the world who have best known commerce and liberty." Latourette, op cit., 435 quotes Evelyn Underhill, "Worship" pp. 319-22 and Dean Inge "The Platonic Tradition in English Religious thought , pp. 4-5 for much the same individualism, practicality and conservatism.

[3] e.g. the "Donation of Constantine".

imperial power gave the opportunity. Western Europe, however, never reached a stable absolutism either in Church or in state. Europe was Christian. Thus the equalitarian clan kinships were supported by the Christian doctrine of individual worth and were not allowed to be gathered up into any imperial necessity. Again, the doctrine of personal responsibility, which the Church herself taught, fostered the lay criticism which she so often resented. Men were conscious that behind all institutions lay an absolute Power. The question is whether they thought of this Power as a "natural" law or whether they identified it with the revealed Will of their God.

The actual practice of medieval Europe may first be traced in a little more detail.

"The law was, during the middle ages, primarily the custom of the community".[1] When, therefore, the king or emperor "made" laws, he did so only as the respresentative of the people, and it was against such an idea of justice that political authority was judged. There was nothing specifically Christian in this idea of justice, which was held also by the Romans. "The authority of the Prince" in short[2] "was . . . derived from the people". The emperors themselves were shy of the ascription of divinity, and it was only "when it was found necessary that one man should take charge of the affairs of /

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[1] A. J. Carlyle "Political Liberty" (1941) pp. 13 ff. quoting Digest I, 3: III, 2: III, 5: Gratian; Decretum; Bracton; Beaumanoir.

[2] Ibid., p. 17.

of the commonwealth" that "a prince was created, and . . . given authority, that what he established should be held valid";[1] thus Pomponius and many other Roman jurists and philosophers. But in fact Justinian could with equal justice claim to be the sole ruler, because in fact, if not in theory, he initiated all laws. Until the "Reception" of Roman law in the later middle age such a view of monarchy would have been regarded in the West not as true kingship, but as tyranny, and even when the Roman idea did impinge upon Western European life, it was met with varying degrees of resistance, and finally was vastly modified even by those nations which had first accepted it. The reason for the resistance and modification undoubtedly owes much to the Christian conscience, whatever secular causes may be adduced in this secular age. It may be quite true, for example, that Cicero spoke about slaves in much the same language as St Paul, but Cicero's views never prevailed in the state as St. Paul's have since done; it may also be true that the Saxon origins of Europe were, within the limits of the manorial system, equalitarian, but the question remains to be answered why the idea of equality has become the key idea of the "Western" way of life. The only reason is that medieval thought and practice were impregnated with Christian ideas. In the 13th century, when Europe was yet "innocent and ignorant"[2] of Roman law, Christian priests were instructing her peoples in the idea of a revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and in the books of that revelation, /

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[1] Ibid quoting Pomponius, Digest 1:2:2; Theod. II, Valentinian II, Justinian.

[2] Maitland in his introduction to Gierke "Political Theories of the Middle Age" (1913), p. xii.

revelation, Holy Writ, the traditions of the Fathers, Augustine's "Civitas Dei", and other expositions.[1]

It was the theory, as distinct from the practice, of law that required the conception of "nature". It is only reasonable to suppose that jurists and philosophers should make obeisance to the superior culture of Antiquity and try to fit their own customs and problems into its terminology. Superficially there was much in common between the law of God and Stoic nature. Christians could agree with the Stoic phraseology that law[2] "radiated from a principle transcending earthly power, . . . and (was) yet true and perfectly binding" and they could say therefore "before the state existed the Lex naturalis already prevailed as an obligatory statute, and that immediately and mediately from this flowed these rules of right to which the State owed even the possibility of its rightful origin", and that even[3] "the highest power on earth was subject to" its rules - including Pope and Kaiser. But Christendom had received its first knowledge of Greece and Rome from Christian priests; for Christendom, therefore, the sanction behind the Lex naturalis was a personal Deity, the Creator of the ends of the earth, and at the same time the ultimate Judge of men. Dante thought of society as[4] "a community which God Himself had constituted and which comprised all man kind". It is thus in the identity of "the whole" from which every partial whole derives intrinsic value, that Christian thought differs from Stoic.

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1 Gierke, op. cit., p.2.

2 Ibid, 75-6 : 172 ff.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid, 4.

In identifying the Author of Law with the Christian God, Christian thought began to develop distinctively Christian interpretations of law. The fact of human failure, for example, and human suffering, were associated with the doctrine of God's act of creation and man's fall from grace, and this interpretation of human nature and origins gave a distinctive colour to the theories of law. Into the classical distinctions of natural law, positive law, and the laws of nations therefore was inserted another distinction dividing the whole from top to bottom, namely that between God's revelation and man's reason.[1] "A creative act performed by man is supposed more or less explicitly by most of the theorists . . . To produce the state in conformity with the type of organisation which Nature supplies was in their eyes the work of human reason"; but "Nature" and "reason" were scarcely distinguishable from "God" and "faith". Even when the state was struggling from the control of the Church, and distinctions were being drawn between the Law of God as[2] "communicated in a supernatural way for a supra-mundane purpose" and the law of nature as "implanted in Natural Reason for the attainment of earthly ends," even when the idea of a secular monarchy distinct in rights both from Church and common law was urged, the ethical as distinct from the legal duties of the ruler were stressed. In other words, the Western idea of the divine right of kings differs from the Roman in that the Western king could only be the servant of God[3] but the Roman was himself divine. A distinction in the term /

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1 Ibid, 29.

2 Ibid, 75-6.

3 See note 6 at end.

term "nature" itself thus emerges, namely as referring empirically to things as they are, and as referring to Creation as an act of God.

Putting these ideas in terms of the Decalogue, the conclusion is that this act of divine law-giving, while of necessity standing by itself as "revelation" distinct from any other conceivable means of knowing the right, nevertheless exercised a controlling effect even upon the idea of "natural" law. The Decalogue was divine law in the sense that it came to Christendom from the faith of the Church, but it was not confined to the practice of the Church, as was, for example, the Mass. It was the touch-stone of lay, not only clerical, morality, and was relevant, therefore, to the problems of home and state in a way that the edicts of the Pope could not be, especially when his authority began to be questioned. Hans Luther, indeed, could criticise the Church specifically in terms of the Decalogue, making the Decalogue a norm of conduct opposed to the advice of the Church; but at the same time, his appeal to that law, rather than to a secularised law of nature, emphasises the influence which faith retained even upon anti-clerical opinion. The law of reason was itself subject to the law of God.

It is this double reference which characterises the use of the Decalogue by the Reformers. As Christians they returned to the Scriptures for their moral authority but as inheritors of Germanic custom and of Classical culture, and of the more complicated civilisation of the emerging society in which they lived, they had to handle also legal and philosophical problems arising from its greater /

greater complexity.[1] The distinction between nature and revelation could not be rigidly maintained either in the sense that the medieval Church claimed, that is by the maintenance of the power of both keys in the hands of a priesthood, nor yet in the sense of the extreme Protestants[2] who damned out of hand the powers of human reason and the systems alleged to derive therefrom. The Reformers, especially Calvin, were aware of the two sides of the problem, namely the need for personal responsibility towards God, and the need for a practical interpretation of God's will for the conduct of world affairs. When they took the Decalogue as the basis of Christian conduct they were conscious of building upon a foundation of revelation, but they were also conscious that the truly Christian life concerned the home, business, and even the affairs of nations.

Brunner[3] dislikes a suggestion put forward by Troeltsch and followed by Bohatec, that a distinction can be drawn between " the absolute law of nature - of individualistic rationalism, both Stoic and modern" and "a relative law of nature" by which Christians assert the idea of the just in itself as it occurs in sinful, historical reality. No doubt it does obscure the problem of natural law, regarded as a problem of absolute significance. But, regarded as a historical problem, a problem, that is, concerning the way in which people did once think, rightly or wrongly, there may be some importance /

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1 e.g. Usury, clerical marriage, and particularly the responsibilities of a democratic society.

2 e.g. Gerald Winstanley in 17th century England.

3 "Justice and the Social Order", p. 243.

importance in the distinction, because, after all, men do act, to quote a word of Brunner himself, in an "immediate" response to a situation rather than according to a preconceived plan. One of course agrees with Brunner's main theme that the reduction of the idea of justice from an absolute to a relative importance in human affairs is deplorable. But this reduction marches step by step with the loss of the personal and individual faith which, to go no further, the Reformers preached. In their preaching, they put revelation first and made nature a relative principle, or reference to the divine Creation subordinated by their reference to the Crucified and justifying Christ. The main point of their reference to nature then is the emphasis upon the total responsibility and the total failure of man. The primary content of their teaching was the revelation of God in Christ, in Scripture and, to a less extent, in Christian experience.

From this point of view, therefore, the relativity is not in the Christian revelation but in the Stoic philosophy. Both agree that law must have an absolute sanction as well as a particular application. But Stoicism and all "natural" theology, seeks the absolute in man, either in his own nature or in the world which he inhabits. It follows, if one begins at this point, that the idea of creation, which is relative in Reformed thinking[1] assumes absolute significance; and, like East and West, never can these twain meet.

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[1] e.g. His doctrine of morals was "enforced by all the sanctions of a religion whose word was law and whose assertions were truth" - A. Mitchell Hunter, "Teaching of Calvin" (1943) p. 220. Calvin's remarks upon Jerome illustrate his confidence in reaching the Truth - "what Jerome thought I care not: let us inquire what is the truth", namely Scripture, INST. 2: 7: 5.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Emergence of the Reformed View of Christian Faith and Conduct.

(i) Liturgical reform.

(ii) The political opportunity for reform.

(iii) The consolidation of reform in preaching.

## (1) LITURGICAL REFORM

The Reformation, like every significant historical movement, may be compared to a growing plant. Its roots may be traced out as distinctive influences leading inevitably to this particular flower at this particular time. But the flower is significant only if the roots are firmly embedded in the ancient soil, the compost of a multitude of separate efflorescences. The richer the soil and the firmer the roots, the more brilliant and free is the blossom that waves above ground. Moreover, this plant, however individual in its emergence, is finally disseminated, by its fruit and its very substance, into the texture of the soil. The student in his subsequent dissection may underrate the size of the flower or the size of the roots and soil, and the Reformation movement has suffered as badly as any historical event from such one-sided criticism. In the generations of the first Reformers, however, there is to be traced quite clearly a movement - sometimes a reluctant movement - away from established custom. It appears most forcefully in the liturgical development. There was equally a conservatism of spirit amidst the flowing tide of social and economic revolution; and this can be illustrated from the political background of reform. Its peculiarity was the belief in the capability of the individual believer to understand and obey, and by his understanding and obedience, to work out the divine will on earth; and this may be described in terms of its preaching.

The significance of the 16th century Reformation for the twentieth century has been clearly indicated by Dr. Karl Barth. It may be necessary, he /

he says,[1] for us, in our endeavour to maintain the essential Reformation position over against Roman Catholicism and Neo-Protestantism, to make "more pointed" the statements of Luther and Calvin, since the Romanism with which they were faced was only the "questionable pelagianising formulations of the later Nominalism . . . and not the systematic method and harmony with which St. Thomas Aquinas developed the principle: Gratia non tollit sed praesupponit et perficit naturam - Santa Maria supra Minerva." The complaint he has against the Neo-Protestants is that, particularly in their alleged doctrines of nature, they are not sufficiently distinct from those "over there"[2] in the Vatican. The rock upon which the Reformation rests, he says, is the doctrine of the "unfree will" of man, to which corresponds the re-creating grace of God in Christ. It is unfortunate, he admits, that Dr Brunner, with his theory of natural "ordinances" such as home and state, should be apparently able to cite even Calvin, the prince of the Reformers, for support. But while we may have to admit in the Reformers a certain slackness in accepting pagan classical doctrines such as "natural" law, we may not admit that their acceptance bore to them the interpretations which Brunner has placed upon them. In other words, Calvin might, for the sake of preserving order against Anabaptist anarchy, admit more of the medieval theory of stability than is really consistent with his theology of salvation, but that acceptance must be recognised as an inconsistency not /

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[1] "Natural Theology," pp. 100 ff.

[2] He was writing at the window of a house on Monte Pincio, Rome.

not to be repeated by his true followers.

If this view of Reformed doctrine is correct, it has to be added that the doctrine of the ~~unfee~~ unfree will was not, apparently, inconsistent with the emergence of the great surge of personal significance, which undoubtedly characterised the period of early Reform. To-day one may sneer at the Reformation as the established church of the middle classes[1] serving shopkeepers as Romanism had pandered to the large land owners and Marxism panders to the industrial workers, but at least even in the sneer is acknowledged the energy of those who embraced the new interpretation of Christian faith. To take the Decalogue as an expression of that faith, one can see how the moralism of the Reformed doctrines became a positive social force. Unlike the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees and unlike the righteousness of the pilgrims and monks of the middle age, the righteousness of the Protestants was interpreted in practical and not frivolous terms.[2] If Protestants were made conscious of personal sin they were also made conscious of the sinfulness of the priesthood on which they had rested for salvation, but above all conscious of salvation by divine grace. The Reformation was thus an age of faith, and like every age of faith, an age of reconstruction[3] and again like every age of faith, an age of confidence and song. The unfree will of man had been set free by and under Christ.

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[1] Tawney, op. cit., p. 111.

[2] Trevelyan, "English Social History", pp. 127: 181-8.

[3] H. Y. Reyburn, "John Calvin" (1914) gives many references from the city Annals (CoR.XLIX ) which illustrate the attempt made in Geneva to give such classes as "serving men" a sense of responsibility to the church and the community in general.

It is the business of this section to indicate the part played by the use of the Decalogue in the vocal expression of this faith. The Decalogue had never, of course, been altogether omitted from religious observance in the medieval church; but then no doubt the worship of Jehovah had also been observed in the Temple even before Josiah cleared out the competitive gods. It is significant that a Christian prince could be called "a second Josiah".[1] The object of the Reformers was not to destroy the Church but to purify it; and in the first instance at least, they did so by an emphasis upon that sort of piety which to the medievalist was specifically "lay". Several instances have been mentioned of the anti-clerical repudiation of a sacramental treasury of vicarious obedience. The temper of 16th century Christendom demanded a clearer interpretation of the moral standards by which all men, priest and layman alike, were to be judged. This standard was found in Scripture and expounded by the early Reformers in terms of the three main parts of the Prone - Decalogue, Creed and Lord's Prayer.[2]

The danger of popular movements is that they become irresponsible. It is one thing to criticise the established order for its inefficiency and even its corruption: it is entirely another to re-establish social order. At first the Reformers were critics, preaching to their congregations in Wittenberg, Zurich or Basel, and appealing to them for renewal of obedience to Jesus Christ. From preaching to disputation and from disputation to local action, against images for example, were still essentially negative steps, leaving the responsibility of government in other /

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[1] Liturgy and Worship, p. 151. Cranmer used the description at Edward VI's coronation.

[2] This was the basic form even of the 1536 "Institutio", which might have been expected from its place in the line of developing Protestant theology to be abstract in its presentation. Chapter III deals with the development.

other hands. But when the Reforming party itself took power it was, perhaps imperceptibly, forced to a change of policy. In the consideration of specific works of Reformers[1] their respective abilities to handle this change of responsibility will be noted: meantime it may be as it were foreshadowed in the fortunes of the Decalogue usage.

The Decalogue is a peculiarly sensitive means of measuring this change of policy. Its function in Biblical piety - both in Old and New Testament tradition - has always been a reminder that the Ultimate judge and the Ultimate standard of human conduct is divine.[2] In the visible Church - that is, the human response to God[3] - this relevance has never been lost sight of, particularly in its relationship to private conduct; but it has not always been recognised as applying to the conduct of man in society. The polytheistic cult of the baalism in pre-Josian Judah and the sacramental principle of medieval Christendom are quite consistent attempts to apply the Will of God to the social conditions of the times. The Josian and the 16th century reformations were the voices of the prophets summoning men to an obedience - which to them was the only true obedience - based upon personal acknowledgment and response to God.

This is not the place to discuss whether the prophetic voices were raised in demand for the impossible. If scribalism were the only interpretation of consistent obedience to the Law then Christians would have to acknowledge that they are emancipated from the bondage of legalism in a sense which might force them into a rejection of all law. Paul endeavoured /

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1 In Chapter III.

2 See Chapter I.

3 In this sense the Church may be extended to cover at least the Fathers of the Old Testament.

endeavoured to show that the scribal obedience was not the only means of obedience,[1] and the Reformers, following him, also endeavoured to steer a middle course between the spiritual slavery of Romanism and the anarchy of Anabaptist enthusiasm. The question at issue here is not so much whether they succeeded as whether, in succeeding, they abandoned the basis of their original prophetic appeal. In the end, did they shift their obedience from the divine command to some humanly elevated absolute like "natural" law? It may be said here in anticipation that the criticism will be laid against Luther, Melanchthon and Zwingli that in some measure, explicitly or implicitly, they did appeal to an authority outside the strict revelation of the Divine Will. It will be argued farther that Calvin specifically attempted to avoid this error. Whether or not he succeeded, it is undoubtedly the case that he opposed the "monarchomachist"[2] tendencies of contemporary Calvinists - in France and England, for example - which sought to justify resistance to inimical rulers, and in doing so appealed to a "natural" law.

The distinction then must be carefully drawn between the appeal to the Decalogue as a popular standard of conduct and as an absolute standard of Christian judgment. In its former position the Decalogue was thoroughly /

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1 e.g., ROMANS VI. It is the impersonal "professional" obedience that Paul denounces, and the parade of obedience that accompanies such an attitude. Christians would still be obedient to the essential requirements of the Divine Will; but their motive would be love, that is, willing co-operation. His attitude to Rome therefore was that, contrary to Jewish slander, the Christian was no professional anarchist, but, on the contrary, a better because a conscientious citizen. This view was more easily advanced because of the good will of the contemporary Roman regime. Neither Paul in his letters nor the early Reformers had to deal with the enmity of the society in which they were forced to live.

2 See below in chapter VII.

thoroughly established in the medieval Church, but that very establishment underlined the limitations imposed upon it. It belonged, with the Lord's Prayer and the sermon, to the Prone. The main worship was the Mass which preceded it. The Reformers reversed this order [redacted] The appeal to the emotions and intellect came first, in order that the communion might be entered into with the proper knowledge and consent of the participants. In the first instance the vehicle used was that of singing. The singing of hymns[1] was probably common enough even before the Reformation but it became at this time the embodiment of the lay share in worship and obedience. Amongst hymns that were written by Luther himself was a metrical paraphrase of "die heylgen gebot" to which he added as a refrain the Kyrie Eleison. This particular use was introduced into England by Coverdale,[2] who made a translation which in turn influenced Cranmer to include in the 1551-2 Book of Common Prayer both the Decalogue and the attached Kyries.[3] The form retained in the present Book of Common Prayer was completed later when the lesser Litany, "Lord, have mercy upon us" was added to each commandment with a slightly longer litany after the tenth.

The movement of Protest required, however, a more definite expression of its distinctive emphasis in the form of its service, and three distinct steps can be traced, in Wittenberg, in Zurich and in Strasburg. Luther himself /

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1 "Liturgy and Worship", p. 178: article "History of the Book of Common Order down to 1662" by F. E. Brightman and K. D. Mackenzie. W. D. Maxwell, "John Knox's Genevan Service Book, 1556" (1931), p. 61, says that singing was "the people's part in the worship." One of the first innovations in Geneva under Farel and Calvin was that of congregational singing (Reyburn, "John Calvin" (1914), pp. 63 ff.)

2 Liturgy and Worship, pp. 178: 310-2: article "the Holy Communion Service" by J. H. Srawley.

3 Perry, op. cit., pp. 88-9.

himself did not introduce many changes in the form of the service. By 1520 he was still using the Mass as the vehicle of worship, but in the vernacular. This "Deudsche Messe" was published in 1526.[1] The vernacular usage, the hymns, the withdrawal of the idea of priestly "oblation"[2] are the signs of the new spirit. Meanwhile, from 1523 onward, he was emphasising the need for evidence of obedience in those partaking of the Holy Supper.[3] His handbooks had a wide influence - in England, for example, where in 1549, that is even before the Interim immigration, Cranmer was tightening up the practice of Church membership.[4] Calvin's catechisms of 1538,[5] the Encheiridion of Cologne (1538) and even the catechism of the Council of Trent (1566) are influenced by these first works of Luther. Luther, however, did not introduce the act of repeating the Decalogue into the vernacular Mass. That innovation required first the work of Zwingli[6] who in 1523 introduced into his Zurich church a service based upon the Prone and not upon the Mass. In this appeal to the teaching of Scripture, /

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[1] No Reformer, indeed, desired change for its own sake. Lacharet's words, quoted by Maxwell, op. cit., p. 36, reflects a conservatism typical of the Reformers. The Mass, he says, "peut et doit être améliore: il n'a pas besoin d'être transformé." Calvin, in every edition of his "Forme" described it as "a form of prayers and administration of the Sacrament according to the creation of the ancient church", i.e., he did not desire to make a new church, but simply to reform the true church.

[2] See above, p. 34 , note 2 .

[3] Liturgy and Worship, pp. 140-1.

[4] In his first Prayer Book (1549) before the Interim immigrations, knowledge of the Decalogue, Lord's Prayer and the Creed was obligatory upon any who should come to the Lord's Supper. Liturgy and Worship, p. 162.

[5] See Reyburn, op. cit., pp. 67 ff.

[6] Liturgy and Worship, pp. 143-4.

Scripture, he was pointing beyond the Church as an institution to the Scriptural authority of the Decalogue and the Lord's Prayer. In short, Zwingli was concerned to establish in his followers a knowledge of the faith that was in them, the authority of their opposition both to papal pretensions and enthusiastic libertinism.

The two influences - what one might call the "sacramental" and the "homiletic" met in Strasburg. In 1524 Theobaldus Niger[1] celebrated a German Mass, like Luther's little more than a translation. But under the influence of Bucer and others, "evangelical" forms entered. For example, the "priester" became a "pfahrrer" and even a "diener". Although the basis of worship was the Mass - that is, the exhibition of the sacrificial work of Christ - its direct relationship to the people was increasingly emphasised. As the authority of the priest diminished the authority of the Word increased. Thus the sermon came into prominence.[2] The Decalogue as an act of confession, if it was not in the original forms, certainly was by 1539.[3] This was the form which Calvin found on his arrival in Strasburg,[4] and it was therefore the form which he translated from German into French for the use of his little congregation. Significantly Calvin seems to have made only one change in this use. His "La maniere /

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1 Ibid., pp. 141 ff. This Mass was celebrated in the St. John's Chapel of the Cathedral of St. Laurence, Strasburg on February 16th, 1524. See also Maxwell, op. cit., pp. 24 ff.

2 The sermon did not appear in either Luther's or Schwarz's Mass. Bucer introduced it - Maxwell, op. cit., pp. 24 ff.

3 Maxwell, op. cit., p. 30.

4 Maxwell, op. cit., p. 32: Liturgy and Worship, p. 142. There had been a small French community of Protestants in Strasburg since 1533, but the German municipal authorities had not permitted them a full service in their own tongue. Calvin's arrival coincided with the lifting of this restriction, and he was therefore invited to compile a service for them. Williston Walker: "John Calvin" (1906) p. 220, suggests there might have been a community of some 600-700.

maniere de faire prières aux églises francoyses" omits any alternative to the Decalogue as an act of confession.[1] This Strasburg use would appear to be the acme of Reformation liturgical reform, and it is still a matter of controversy whether subsequent retractions in 1542 were desirable or not.[2] The fact, however, remains that on his return to Geneva he did not permit himself to be influenced by the iconoclastic[3] spirit in certain matters, including the omission of the Decalogue as an integral part of the service.[4] It is rather strange that the use of the Decalogue should have been an omission. Farel's "La Maniere et Fasson qu'on tient es lieux lesquels Dieu de sa Grace a visités", written in 1533, which had been accepted in Geneva in 1536, contained the use of the Decalogue as part of the order of Public Worship.[5]

The clue to the changes demanded of Calvin is probably to be found in his /

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1 Otherwise it is simply a translation of the German use. Calvin says, "Quant aux prières de dimanches, i.e., prius la forme de Strasburg et en empruntey la plus grande partie." Opera X, 894, quoted by Maxwell, op. cit., p. 22. Calvin's form of the Decalogue, incidentally, seems, like Luther's and Knox's, to have been metrical. Opera VI, 221. Probably, however, Calvin simply borrowed from Bucer, who in his Psalter, had borrowed from Luther: Maxwell, op. cit., p. 32. No copy of the original edition of the "Forme" exists, but the second edition, edited by Calvin's successor Peter Brully, in 1542, claims to be simply a reprint of Calvin's work.

2 See Maxwell's article "Calvin's attitude to public worship" in the Church Service Society's Annual, 1929-30.

3 This phrase is also Maxwell's. "John Knox's Genevan Service Book", p. 19. The text of this Genevan liturgy is given in Kidd, "Documents of the Continental Reformation" (1911), pp. 615 ff. The Decalogue of course remained part of the Psalter, Maxwell, op. cit., p. 70.

4 Maxwell gives other omissions in his article: see note 5 above. These included the pronunciation of Absolution and the habit of keeeling at prayer. It is worth noting that Calvin's use of the Decalogue was, unlike Bucer's, without any attached refrain of Kyrieleison. It was the Decalogue itself that was resented in Geneva - Maxwell, "John Knox", p. 32.

5 See Reyburn, op. cit., pp. 62-3.

his desire for, and the Genevan rejection of, a weekly communion. Farel had not used the Decalogue in his order for the Lord's Supper. That is to say, he emphasised the preaching of the Word more than the administration of the sacrament; but this marked his limitation as a Reformer,[1] and it was just because he knew himself to be a pioneer but not a builder that he constrained Calvin in the first place to remain in Geneva.[2] The integration of the Reformed "faith" into the act of communicating was one of the reconstructive principles which Calvin perfected during his subsequent exile in Strasburg. The refusal of the Genevan city council to accept this usage was partly political and partly, as has been said, iconoclastic. The political objection will be discussed further in the next section, but it may be summarised here as the objection on the part of the city fathers to the clear relationship which Calvin stressed between personal conduct and administration of the Church offices, particularly as the right to administer and therefore, by implication, the right to judge, was thus left in the power of the Church.[3] This is the perpetual source of disagreement between Church and State which has shaken Christian society in Europe in every age.[4]

The iconoclastic objection may be traced to the Guillermin party which supported Calvin's return to Geneva.[5] The very name of the party indicates the influence of Farel. This party was in a minority against the other two main parties, the crypto Romanist and the "Artichauds" who were /

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1 As Calvin himself suggested in his dying address to the ministers, see Kidd, op. cit., p. 649.

2 Reyburn, op. cit., 58 ff.

3 In 1549, when Geneva was becoming restive under Calvin's idea of discipline the Council ordered Calvin to preach a sermon every day in the week, and to repeat the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments frequently. The motive was obviously to annoy Calvin and to confine his interests to personal rather than political affairs. Calvin's reply was their own of 1542, viz., that over repetition savoured of superstition - Reyburn, 148.

4 An interesting example from the 18th century is Dr Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man. See Hugh Stowell, "Life of Rt. Rev. Thomas Wilson" (1829).

5 Reyburn, op. cit., pp. 100 ff.

were pro-Bernese, but there was sufficient religious, if not political, agreement[1] between the Guillermins and the Artichauds to advance the judicial implications of Reform even while Farel and Calvin were in exile.[2] Calvin was no doubt also influenced by the increasing numbers of refugees who entered Geneva. They exercised no political power, of course, until later in Calvin's stay in the city, but since he was spiritually of their numbers, particularly in the darkest days of his isolation, it is reasonable that he should have considered their conscience in his own practice.

The two editions of Calvin's "Forme" both found a home in England. Cranmer's second book of Common Prayer and the Puritan book of Common Order both received a direct influence from Calvin, the one from Strasburg, the other from Geneva, and it is perhaps in this confrontation of the two forms that one can see most clearly the conflict of their implications. Before 1549 English Reform was, like the movement elsewhere, mainly Lutheran in its inspiration. But in that year it was approaching a crisis. Cranmer was calling the young Edward a "second Josiah" and the influx of Continental refugees from the Interim was at its peak.[3] These men represented the Strasburg school of Reform. Peter Martyr and Bucer, for example, came from Strasburg to occupy chairs of divinity in Oxford and Cambridge. Valérand Pullain was a successor of Calvin in Strasburg. They /

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1 Berne was Geneva's Protestant neighbour, but she had claims upon Genevan teritory. The Guillermins stood for an independent Protestant Geneva.

2 Reyburn, op. cit., 98 ff, gives some examples of Reforming legislation during the absence of Calvin in Strasburg.

3 Liturgy and Worship, p. 171.

They and the returned English exiles like Coverdale and Hooper gave an impetus to Reform, and the measures they proposed were Calvinist rather than Lutheran. Bucer's social proposals will be considered as a sort of postscript to the whole study, but the liturgical proposals are relevant here. Pullain, for example, translated Calvin's Strasburg rite, which contained the Decalogue as part of the Communion service. This was the "Liturgia Sacra" - published in England in 1551. Laski, who had come from Emden, published the "Forma et Ratio tota ecclesiastice Ministerii" which was the Genevan rite of Farel called "La Maniere et Fasson, etc." and Huycke published "The form of common prayer in the churches of Geneva" which was that which Calvin had finally adopted in Geneva, after 1542, and which omitted the Decalogue. Of these three Pullain's had the strongest influence on the English use.[1]

Alongside this English use of Calvin's Strasburg rite there was practised the Genevan use. In Frankfort, John Knox had before him a copy of both uses, but in his own "Forme" followed the Genevan. The English Puritan, therefore, omitted, while the Anglican repeated, the Decalogue in the Communion service. In the early (1556) editions of the Frankfort Book,[2] however, the Decalogue was included in a metrical form amongst the "one and fiftie Psalms of David" and in 1560 there was added, amongst other pieces such as the Nunc Dimittis, etc., a prayer after the Commandments called the "Addition". In 1561 some of these pieces were omitted to permit an increased number of Psalter pieces in verse, but the Decalogue and Lord's Prayer /

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[1] "It was not unnatural that Cranmer, under the double influence of English tradition and the contemporary practice of highly respected foreign reformers, should have hit upon the idea of combining the Decalogue with the Kyrie-eleison as a regular portion of the new rite" - Liturgy and Worship, p. 178.
This does not mean, of course, that Cranmer drew the English Rite out of the "Liturgia Sacra". There had been a separate development of the English service from the Mass from 1547 onwards (that is to say, before the Interim immigrations and the 1549 Prayer Book). Liturgy and Worship, pp. 153 ff.

[2] C. G. McCrie, "Public Worship of Presbyterian Scotland ( 1892 ), pp. 120-1.

Prayer were retained. The Scottish edition of 1562, however, included a full Psalter but no other metrical pieces. This omission does not of course imply the total omission of the Decalogue in Presbyterian usage. For example, although Confirmation was not practised in the English Congregation at Geneva, and no service is printed in Knox's "Forme", yet "none are apt to be admitted to that mysterie (i.e., the Lord's Supper) who can not formalie say the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of Belief and declair the source of the Law."[1]

The conclusion to which one is drawn, therefore, in this discussion of the liturgical use of the Decalogue is that it stood at the fulcrum upon which the balance swung between ecclesiastical and lay jurisdiction over conduct, and to a lesser degree, the balance between a "liturgical" and a "simple" service. Characteristically English is the manner in which the Decalogue has been retained in the Communion Service of the Anglicans without bringing the conflict which was feared in Geneva. Would it be true to say that the reason is to be found in the retention of the little liturgical additions to each commandment? Did these effectively take the point from the Decalogue and return it to a sacramental pigeon-hole? These are polemical questions irrelevant to the main discussion, and no doubt it is according to one's views upon them that one will judge Calvin's proposals and practice in Geneva from 1542 onwards.

(ii)

Calvin's volte face before Genevan opposition leads directly to the problem /

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1 Laing, Knox's "Works", II, 240.

problem of his views on authority. He retreated not only on the question of the Decalogue. He allowed his desire for a weekly communion also to be set aside by the Council. But he was not subservient to the Council. He carried his insistence, for example, upon the weight of Ameaux' punishment for vilifying his authority as a pastor.[1] He opposed Perrin in the very teeth of conservative opposition and secured his banishment.[2] And again, he on occasion refers for action to the lay authority matters which to-day are left for the Church to solve as best it can.[3] Clearly he regarded Church and State as necessary if not always easy colleagues.

The history of Geneva has something to do with this state of affairs. Calvin was in no way beholden to Geneva. He regarded his first stay in the city as like the torments of hell;[4] and it was at the strong instigation of citizens like Perrin, who saw in him the only hope of political security, that he returned from Strasburg. Geneva needed Calvin. Why? Geneva, apart from what Calvin made it, was unique. "Ethnographically . . . connected with both the Teutonic and the Latin races, by language . . . French, by religious interests and associations Italian, by political instincts and affinities Swiss, by commercial and industrial genius German, it yet was independent of them all, both in its geographical situation and its /

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1 C.R. XLIX, 368-372.

2 Rilliet, (see below).

3 e.g., matters of doctrine-"Ordonnances." C.R. XXXVIII A 18.

4 Herninjard VI, 228: VII, 43.

its municipal ambitions.[1] Almost surrounded by Savoyard territory, and yet independently ruled by a Bishop, its life was a long series of agitations and intrigues. The house of Savoy had obvious ambitions in the city, and had long maintained the power of nomination to the post of Vicedom, that is to say, to the office of the Bishop's secular representative. But the power of nomination ~~the~~ to the bishopric remained partly in the hands of the citizens themselves, who also retained certain rights of self-government through their various powers of election to the magistracy. There was thus a triangular tension amongst the parties, the citizens agreeing with the Church in its suspicions of Savoy, and yet, like the House of Savoy, determined to retain as much as possible of the moral and social authority of the Church in their own hands. So long as the contest remained three-cornered, the independence of the citizens was secure. They enjoyed spiritual privileges which did not exist where the Church's authority remained unchallenged, and with the help of the Church they held the political power of Savoy at bay without having to accept the limitations of the Swiss cantonal system of mutual defence. Their character therefore was both aristocratic and democratic; aristocratic in the sense that it remained /

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[1] A. M. Fairbairn, article "Calvin and the Reformed Church" in Cambridge Modern History, II, pp. 342 ff.
Other sources of information about Geneva at this time are
Reyburn, "John Calvin" (1914)
Williston Walker, "John Calvin."
Doumergue, "Jean Calvin," II (1905).
Kampschulte, "Johann Calvin: seine Kirche und sein Staat in Genif", (1869-99).
H. D. Foster, "Geneva before Calvin" in American Historical Review, 1903. "Calvin's programme for a Puritan state in Geneva." "Harvard Theological Review", October, 1908.
Rilliet, "Relation du Proces Criminel Intenté à Genève, en 1553, contre Michel Servet, rédigée d'après les documents originaux par Albert Rilliet" (Geneva, 1844), translated into English in 1846 by W. K. Tweedie.

remained unabashed in the presence of all authority, democratic in the sense that its instincts clashed with those of its ruling powers both in Church and in state.

In 1513 the balance of power was broken by a successful intrigue of Savoy in the appointment of the bishop. "Bishop and Duke," says the chronicle, "like Herod and Pilate, stood united against the city."[1] The patriots, remaining - even while Reform was in the air - loyal to Rome, first tried to wean the Bishop from his unholy alliance, but both he and his successor remained in the power of Savoy. The Genevans therefore turned to their Swiss neighbours, Berne and Friberg, proposing a joint citizenship. Berne, however, was by this time Protestant and hesitated to come to the aid of an unreformed state. Perhaps for the first time in their municipal history the Genevans were deprived of all their allies; and the bishop, Pierre de la Baume, thought the moment opportune to declare them rebels and call in open Savoyard force. But in this extreme issue Berne preferred a Roman Catholic Geneva independent of Savoy to a Geneva subject to an external power. In Geneva too the necessity of association with neighbours was recognised. Criticism of episcopal ambitions developed into a positive sympathy with Reform and in February 1534 Protestant preachers, including Farel, were at last admitted into the city. Their influence produced in 21st May, 1536, the famous decree of the Council that Geneva would henceforth live "according to the holy evangelical law and the Word of God."[2]

One /

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[1] quoted from Fairbairn.

[2] Decree of the General Council, 21st May, 1536. C.R. XLIX, 202.

One might criticise this "conversion" of Geneva as the price of political assistance. But Farel was certainly not the man to accept a compromise or tolerate false religion, and there is no reason to suppose that even the Council secretly wished to retain allegiance to the pope. Religion was in these days a vital issue, and the political survival of Geneva obviously lay with Reform; so they administered their new allegiance firmly against any who hankered after Roman ways. The issue between Calvin and the Council was never whether Reform ought to be retained. Rather it concerned the ethical consequences of reform.[1] The implications of the vow to live according to the holy Evangelical law of God meant one thing for him and another for them; rather, the Genevans wanted a lax interpretation, Calvin imposed one that was almost too burdensome to bear. He was supported in his view by the "French"[2] party, that is, the refugees who sought sanctuary from persecution. They did not at first possess the voting power of citizens, although Calvin latterly pressed for the reception of increasing numbers; but their influence as Churchmen was obviously more extreme than that of those who had not suffered for conscience' sake.

Calvin's /

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1 Rilliet makes the point that the party of "Libertines", much of whose influence and patriotism belonged to the political interests of Geneva before its Reform, desired a different kind of prosperity from that which Calvin enforced. Hence the personal conflict of, e.g., Calvin and Perrin. Calvin's support came increasingly from the "French" group, which included all refugees, and who were understandably more eager for extreme religious measures than the Libertines. Latterly Calvin pressed for the admission of an increasing number of these refugees into full citizenship, i.e., into voting power.
Rilliet, p. 80.
Walker, pp. 355, says between 1549-59, 5017 such citizens were created.
De Crue, "L'action politique de Calvin" (1909), pp. 10-11.

2 See preceding note.

Calvin's character was also an important factor in Genevan life. He would have made as efficient an inspector of public nuisances as he made an administrator of human destinies, says one of his critics.[1] His sense of the just extended to the last degree of his jurisdiction, and he was at the same time gifted with phenomenal powers of administrative imagination and zeal. The unfortunate Genevese, therefore, were caught in the toils of a pastor whom they had welcomed as an outstanding exponent of the Word of God, but who insisted in implementing to the last iota of public and private conduct the demands of that Law. He had little consideration for human frailty, his own or that of others. Like Moses, says Farel,[2] he maintained his power by the respect he extorted, not by a love which he could not win. Not surprisingly, two serious attempts were made to remove him. The first succeeded, and he was banished to Strasburg. The second, the Servetus affair, did not succeed. Calvin was indispensable to Geneva, all the more so because he never asked for any personal power.[3] He always fought for a principle.

The /

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1 A. Mitchell Hunter, "Teaching of Calvin" (1943), op. cit., p. 3.

2 Ibid.

3 Calvin never held higher office than that of pastor. His political influence was exerted through his sympathisers in office - so that the editors of the "Annales" in C.R. XLIX can refer to the election of syndics as "anti-calvinist" e.g. February 3, 1538 (C.R. XLIX, 221). He was not even a full citizen until 1559, but he was constantly referred to in matters of theology and administration and seems to have been a sort of president at the Consistory (C.R. XLIX, 396) the "Ordonnances" and "Consilia" (C.R. XXXVIII, part 1) show the range of his interests, which covered even the arrangements for city police (ibid., pp. 125 ff). At the same time his ordinary pastoral labours - preaching and officiating at marriages, etc., were incessant, as the "Annales" constantly show.

The principle upon which Calvin worked was the indissoluble bond between Christian obedience and good citizenship. On the one hand, therefore, he was prepared to accept the verdict of his fellow believers on matters of ecclesiastical practice,[1] but on the other he insisted that membership of the church should be distinguished by Christian obedience in the home, in business and in politics. Geneva was to be a "Christian" city.[2] Its spiritual ancestry, therefore, was to be found in the people of God; their daily conduct was to be regulated by the same Power as created the ends of the earth. The argument of the 1559 edition of the "Institutes" illustrates this assumption.[3] Book I deals at length with our knowledge of God the Creator; Book II discusses man's Fall and thus the necessity of God's redeeming work in Christ. This work is manifest to the "Fathers" under the Law, to us under the Gospel. Law and Gospel are not, however, antithetical. The Law is part of Christ's mediatorial work, His redeeming work before the Incarnation, as if He were reaching out for man by the means which man could best understand. The Law was no stranger to the Gospel. Book III deals with "the mode of obtaining the grace of Christ, the benefits it confers, and the effects resulting from it." In this section Calvin discusses the doctrine of election in order to establish the absolute value of divine grace. Christian obedience is a universal requirement not to be escaped on the grounds of human distinction. /

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1 Not only did he accept the Genevan verdict on weekly communion, etc. Troeltsch, op. cit., II, 579 ff, says he was willing to make concessions in doctrine with other Christian bodies.

2 The outstanding issue was the Confession of Faith which Calvin and Farel proposed in 1537. Piette "John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism (1937), pp. 59-60, suggests that this demand was an act of spiritual tyranny. Unlike the massacres of Paris the punishment in Geneva was at this time only a request, "aultre part demorer ou il vivront a leur plaisir (Annales - C.R. XLIX, 216)

3 Reyburn, op. cit., remarks that the 1559 Institutes follow the pattern of the Apostle's Creed, whereas earlier editions had followed a simpler plan. The Apostle's Creed itself, of course, proceeds from God's Being to man's experience and hope, and the interpretation here adduced remains substantially correct. May Calvin's motive in recasting the argument not have been to emphasise this procedure?

distinction.[1] It is, in short, a Law, binding even the reprobate. The man in Christ therefore is man as God intended him to be, and in Book IV Calvin discusses the relationship of this man to other saved men, and finally, the hardest of all problems, his relationship to the others who are not, or not yet, in Christ.

Calvin's views upon political administration were, therefore, theocratic if by theocracy is meant constant reference to divine authority.[2] His basic assumption is that every detail of every individual's life in every generation must be conformable to a rule that has eternal significance and can yet be known and administered by human intelligence acting under the divine Spirit.[3] Calvin eschewed priesthood whether writ large or small. He himself had every opportunity to wield personal power but never accepted any title or office other than that of pastor.[4] He even continued to do the work of a pastor - preaching, visitation, celebration of the sacraments and offices of the Church - while engaged on his labours of higher advice and administration. On the other hand he gave large responsibility to the other orders of the ministry.[5] There were doctors to /

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1 The case of Amied Perrin illustrates this view of Calvin. Rilliet, op. cit., p. 78, quotes Calvin as saying about Perrin's condemnation that it had the effect "on the one hand of making it publicly known, that there was now no longer any hope of escaping from correction . . . and . . . that I have no other treatment for my friends than for my enemies."

2 Carew Hunt, op. cit.

3 This doctrine is particularly brought out in the paragraph INST., 4: 10: 17. An example of this interaction is given by Doumergue, V, p. 227, in his description of the election by the Consistory of a minister.

4 See above, p.69,, note 3.

5 See below, Chapter 3, section 5, for a discussion of the "Ordonnances".

to teach the schools, elders to keep in touch with local members for ordinary - including disciplinary - purposes, deacons to administer poor relief. In extreme cases of obstruction there was even the magistrate or the Council itself to take the responsibility of final judgment and coercion. Ordained and lay had each his own function. Perhaps the one was not even "greater" than the other. Certainly the ordained man had no access to knowledge that was closed to the layman. Calvin always offered his suggestions to the Council in the name of the "ministers" as if to imply that the Word had spoken to the group engaged in prayer and study. Like all the Reformers he believed that the truth could be reached by plain discussion. Therefore on the one hand he distrusted the Anabaptist claim to special revelations that one must accept on the authority of individuals, and on the other he insisted that no one - the minister, for example - owed a different[1] obedience than anyone else's. The Bible was to be read by all, expounded by the minister, discussed if need be in session, and finally was to be obeyed by all in every agreed interpretation of its Law. Those who would not obey or who carried their conscientious objection to the point of open disobedience were guilty both of blasphemy and of civil crime.[2] They would not be permitted in a Christian society and must either leave, or suffer the consequence at least of restraint and perhaps even of destruction.

Calvin's /

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[1] i.e., different in quality as distinct from degree. Instances will be found in Chapter 6 of the necessity of a good example on the part of the minister. Nor was a minister allowed to take usury, but this for a practical reason. In marriage a minister was expected to bear his social burden with the rest of mankind.

[2] This conclusion is inevitable, as Fairbairn points out in the article quoted, from the idea of a "Church - State". Camb. Mod. Hist., II, 374-5 See also de Crue, op. cit., p. 8, "Rien n'est plus étranger à Calvin que l'idée de la tolerance religieuse."

Calvin's doings and sufferings in Geneva have been discussed in detail by many eminent writers. They have an obvious bearing upon his theological thinking. For the purpose of this essay it is sufficient to say that both in the years of his adversity and in the years of his unquestioned supremacy Calvin maintained the right and duty of the Church to judge of right conduct and to withhold communion from such as the appointed officers of the Church should deem unworthy to partake.[1] Whatever one may think of the system one cannot but admire both the consistency and the personal courage of the man who so often stood alone in defence of his views. Calvin might not, however, as Tawney remarks,[2] have wished to be called a Calvinist. Tawney means that Calvinism outside Geneva was not of the same stuff as that which held there in Calvin's lifetime. But Calvin would also have objected to the term on the grounds that he was not the apostle of himself but the apostle of Christ. His tenacity depended upon his certainty of the revelation with which he believed himself entrusted. It is clear that the theological basis of his thinking was a serious acceptance of that which has been revealed by God in His Scriptures and in His Christ, and that his ethical principle was that of discipline. These emphases will require constant reference in subsequent chapters, and the final question for this section will be why Geneva tolerated Calvin and why he stayed on in Geneva.

The /

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1 This was the crux of the matter in which Berthelier represented the opposition of the anti-Calvinists. Calvin's refusal was made at the nadir of his political fortunes. They were repaired by the mistake of the Libertines in putting forward Servetus to oppose Calvin theologically.

2 op. cit., p. 107.

The reason why Geneva would always stop short of its persecution at Calvin's suggestion[1] to leave is, as has been said, that Calvin was indispensable to Genevan prosperity. It was, as it were, a new city, not quite part of the Swiss cantonal system and determined not to be what militarily it was in great danger of being - part of the French Kingdom. The maintenance of Reform, therefore, was important to Geneva both as a means of retaining Swiss support and of maintaining friendship with the Protestant states of Germany. Calvin's reputation was thus to Geneva an invisible rampart. Moreover, commercially, Geneva was reaping the trade, particularly the financial trade, that had once passed through Lyons.[2] The vision of the Genevese morally, therefore, was away from the feudal restraints of medieval society to which, in a large degree, the Roman Catholic church and the Lutheran theology were still bound.[3] In a word, Geneva required Calvin as the defender of usury, upon which the very life of the city economically depended.

Calvin required Geneva. He remained in the first instance and returned in 1542 to the torments of residence because he knew Geneva to be the best pulpit in Europe.[4] With an eye to Italy and particularly to France he set up his college out of which students poured into neighbouring countries, and /

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1 Reyburn makes this point, op. cit., 157, 164, 194.

2 Tawny, op. cit., 118.

3 Ibid., 105 ff. The same remark has been made in a recent book, "The Heritage of the Reformation", reviewed in "Expository Times", Vol. LXI, number 8.

4 Reyburn, op. cit., 106.

and even overseas[1] carrying with them the trained mind and spirit and the theology which could alone effectively establish the new movement. Doumergue,[2] speaking of Laski's church system in Emden, remarks upon the characteristically democratic discipline which was practised there. The influence spread to the Dutch states, Scotland and England, and even to some extent to Poland;[3] and wherever the policy outlined by Calvin was followed, there grew up a tough core of responsible religious conviction which politically developed into a democratic nationalism which broke the great medieval empires. It is in keeping with the Calvinist spirit that in our own times Geneva is the centre of international movements. The Red Cross and the League of Nations, which will no doubt be associated by the less disillusioned historians of the future with the United Nations Organisation, both appeal to the consent and support of individuals of all nations. It is almost a religious appeal, demanding, as Calvin's preaching demanded, a personal response to a revealed truth. One turns naturally, therefore, to preaching as the means which Calvin used to achieve his ends.

(iii)

Preaching played a large part in the life and influence of all the Reformers. Calvin himself preached a very large number of sermons[4] in Geneva /

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1 Mitchell Hunter, op. cit.

2 Jean Calvin, V.227, Carew Hunt, op. cit.

3 Reyburn, op. cit., p. 307.

4 T. H. L. Parker, "The Oracles of God" (1947) gives an appendix with the known sermons of Calvin. They are more than two thousand in number, and thirty-five volumes are still missing.

Geneva alone, and clearly regarded that side of his work as of the utmost importance, not only as a means of expounding the Word of God to the faithful but also as a means of beating out the implications of that Word for the daily life of Geneva. In February 1545, for example, he wrote to Viret to say that he had "broken ground upon the internal state of the city in ten sermons".[1] The fact that he chose the means of preaching for such an analysis of civic conditions reveals much both of Calvin's and of Calvin's Geneva. Calvin conceived his public to be in the congregations that he addressed.[2] In Geneva at least, therefore, the political power was to rest with the citizens who were in turn to delegate it to their elected magistrates. Authority was of God, but it was not given of divine right to prince or president; it was mediated to them by the voice of God's faithful people;[3] and in turn the voice of the people was instructed by God's Own Word as preached and studied.

The following paragraphs are not a sermon of Calvin's, but a consideration of the problems of all Christian preaching with special reference to the kind of problem with which Calvin as an administrator had to deal. In preaching, the Christian is both "under God" and face to face with other human personalities, believers and unbelievers. As under God he rests in an inescapable certainty that the Word set forth is, in its essentials at least - for some allowance must be made for human weakness - absolute Truth.[4] But if the human words of the preacher are /

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1 quoted by Parker, op. cit., p. 35.

2 Fairbairn, op. cit.

3 Doumergue, V. 424 refers to this "liberalism" as evolving a "vertu particulière" of monarchy, viz. eloquence. "Le roi doit persuader ses sujets plutôt que les forcer."

4 Parker op. cit., 50 ff.

are to be tested by the open Book before him, the Book Itself is being tested by the human experience of the preacher and the hearers, for the task of the preacher is not simply to declaim, "Thus said the Lord" to some historical situation now past and done with, not even to assert, "Thus saith the Lord" as if the Word were a mathematical axiom, true but soulless, but "Thus saith the Lord here and now" to the practical particular situation in which we live. The preacher is God's "Cadi", His mouth-piece under the Holy Spirit, and the Word preached, though it refers often to things said and done "once for all" yet has a constant living reference to the continually opening present. Not only the preacher, therefore, but the congregation also,[1] have a contribution to make to the sermon; for the point of the preacher's exhortation is to direct believers along a certain line of action, because they have already accepted so much of God's divine command. It is not altogether correct to say with Brunner of the prophets that they were "used and used up",[2] nor to conclude that Calvin thought of God's servants as mere mouth-pieces.[3] Certainly he drove himself and others to the utmost, perhaps he even over-rode individual personality in the pursuit of God's greater glory, but the God Whom he preached was no impersonal Force laying unintelligent conditions upon human existence.[4] He was the God and /

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1 Under the Holy Spirit Who creates faith. INST., 1: 7: 4 - 5.

2 Philosophy of Religion, p. 163.

3 He did, of course, speak of the Canonical books as dictated by the Holy Spirit (INST., 1: 6: 1 ff: also 1: 7: 1 - 5) also 4: 8: 6. The writers were thus "secretaries" (amanuenses) 4: 8: 9, and their writings 'oracles' of God, since God "consecrated their mouths and tongues to His service (4: 1: 5). Also "Calvin and the Reformation", 159 ff.

4 Calvin's distrust of the Anabaptists was precisely that they raised "private revelations" above Scriptural truth - INST. 1: 9: passim. He contended that even in the reign of Christ, "the true and full felicity of the new Church will consist in their being ruled not less by the Word than by the Spirit of God." 1: 9: 1. Like Paul, therefore, he desired prophesying "to edification" rather than speaking with tongues. 1 COR., XIV, 2ff.

and Father of our Lord, Who spared not His Only-begotten Son. The greater glory of God was the best life for man.

Ultimately the problem of the preacher is that of the unbeliever. If the situation contained only believers there would be no suggestion of a "natural" law, as distinct in essence from a "revealed" law, since all evidence which our experience throws up would be traced to the hand of the Creator. The task of the preacher would thus be merely a constant explication of mundane experience in terms of the revealed workings of God with His historic people. Luther, according to Doumergue,[1] accepted this delimitation of the Church's task, leaving mundane affairs to the prince whom he elevated to the spiritual level of a bishop. Calvin, too, it must be admitted, took little account of individual claims to dissent. Servetus, Gruet, Berthelier, Perrin, and many more found Geneva too hot for them, and that not for their moral delinquency, but for theological opposition to the Reformer. Disparagers of Calvin ask why their views could not have been tolerated, provided they should keep the peace; but of course the question is foolish. Calvin's state was a Christian state, and its peace therefore required the maintenance of Christian standards - theological as well as ethical - just as a modern state has to persuade the conscientious objector[2] to total war /

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[1] op. cit., V.47-8. "Il demandait aux princes chrétiens de devenir évêques."

[2] The analogy of the conscientious objector is perhaps the closest to the 16th century heretic, because he is objecting to principles and actions which are important, both practically and emotionally, to society. I understand that in National Socialist Germany such men were beheaded as traitors. The British method of restraint by adverse public opinion, toleration of religious objection, and imprisonment only in the event of non-religious recalcitrance was equally inconsistent, if more humane, for the pacifist ate food brought by war-like methods, and was thus forced to be inconsistent with his principles; and at the same time, for security reasons, was not permitted to seek asylum in a society in which he could conscientiously live.

war to stifle his scruples during a national emergency. In the years that were opening out after Calvin's life such persons could retire to the empty lands beyond the oceans, and there live according to the dictates of their conscience. Many did; both non-conformists[1] to dictatorial rule and "black sheep" who could continue to sow wild oats amongst defenceless natives without scandal on the paternal door-step.[2] We have returned to-day full cycle to the problem of accommodation of the unbeliever that Calvin and his age, cooped up in Christendom, strove to solve.[3]

The controversy into which Karl Barth and Emil Brunner have entered in their famous pamphlets, "Nature and Grace" and "Nein" illustrate the problem that Calvin was facing. And in the first place, it is significant that Barth thought it necessary to make an "angry Introduction" to his reply to Brunner. These matters are not merely of academic, dispassionate interest, but the very stuff of faith. Like Calvin, Barth has to conclude from his very earnestness of pursuit, that an opponent is not just mistaken but is somehow reprehensible in defending his mistake. So Barth prefaces his discussion of Brunner's doctrine of "ordinances" with a scornful question,[4] "Who are we, sinners through and /

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[1] E.g., the Puritans of England, although they were unwilling to consider themselves as non-conformists - E. H. Byington, "The Puritan in England and New England" (1896); "The Puritan as a Calvinist and Reformer" (1899). He points out their difficulty in creating a social system which would not lose anything of the zeal of the first settlers. Doumergue in "Calvin and the Reformation" (1909) pp. 24 ff, discusses a suggestion that the Anabaptist zeal could be the real force of such reconstruction.

[2] Thackeray mentions such black sheep in "The Virginians".

[3] And which they did solve, according to Doumergue, e.g., "Jean Calvin" V, p. 215 in terms of discipline. Knox in Scotland is of course another example. Details abound in Graham, op. cit.

[4] See "Natural Theology", p. 86.

and through" to assert the "rightness" of this or that sociological axiom. But he agrees that the axiom is indeed an axiom. That is to say, he does not deny the existence of universal sociological custom, and does not deny the "instincts and reason which both believers and unbelievers have every reason to allow to function in the life of the community." What he does deny is the argument that on the basis of such knowledge alone there can be any conclusion about the nature of the God and Father of our Lord. Indeed, he goes on,[1] if the concept of "law" is to be introduced, "the physical, biological and chemical 'laws of nature" have a much greater claim to be called 'law' than the variable practices which form the basis of, for example, marriage. "Clarity and certainty" are possible about external nature in a manner that they are not possible about human affairs.

Both Barth and Brunner make their appeal to Calvin, and both claim to be interpreting Calvin aright. Both also agree that they are Christian believers, having a concern for the eternal salvation of those who are not. It is the manner of approach to the unbeliever that separates them. Brunner wants to speak to the unbeliever of the God Whom they are "ignorantly" worshipping; Barth wants to preach the mere dogma of the faith, leaving to the Holy Spirit the task of placing the seed in the ground.[2] Both also agree that the unbelief of the unbeliever is not to be considered for a moment as conceivably alternative to the Truth /

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., 54 ff: 127.

Truth that is in Christ.

What did Calvin do in his preaching? This is a different question from that which asks, "What would Calvin say to our situation?", and perhaps one can say at this point that the multitude of Calvin studies in our present times are valuable just because Calvin's mind and times are relevant to our problems. Calvin in his preaching faced no atheistic dogma. He found life in Geneva akin to the torments of Hell, but not because the Genevans opposed his doctrine. They needed his doctrine but they found it hard to bear. They were, in short, Christian believers, though not yet thoroughly reformed. Calvin took their faith for granted. Moreover he took their power of reasoning for granted.[1] The Renaissance had introduced a confidence in human intelligence that no longer exists now that we have discovered the power of deceptive propaganda. Whatever, therefore, Calvin might say about corruption,[2] he tacitly assumed that the Truth when presented carried its own conviction to hearts that were not dominated by an evil will to revolt.[3] So he could conclude, the Fathers of the Old Testament, who knew not the fulfilment of God's purpose in Jesus Christ, were nevertheless in His Kingdom by the faith with which they pursued the unknown ends of His divine commands. Moreover, it was possible to say that the pagans had their "Fathers" who, although cut off from the revelation that was given to Israel /

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1 In fact, as De Crue says, Calvin characteristically accepted the established order, op. cit., p. 12.

2 INST., 2: 1 passim.

3 INST., 2: 10: 23.

Israel, nevertheless had sincerely pursued the dictates of reason. In short, Calvin believed that God had not left Himself without witness in the world to such as had eyes to see. The Holy Spirit may be said to have guided the good pagans along the Way of Christ.[1]

This interpretation seems to favour Brunner; and Barth is wrong in the implication that he makes of truth as strictly impersonal. For Calvin, human affairs were not of relative significance. God's Word was to man, even if man had fallen. As Brunner says elsewhere, if human affairs are to be relegated to this sub-absolute level, there is an inevitable descent from an "objective, superhuman standard of justice" to a "subjective law of human reason",[2] and then to a law of Nature where nature is external to human personality, and finally, by a simple identification of the state - a particular state - with the reality of nature, to sheer impersonal totalitarianism. On the other hand, Barth is correctly interpreting Calvin when he scornfully rejects the analogy of human marriage as a type of eternal natural law.[3] Whatever marriage may have been "si integer stetisset Adam" it represented to Calvin a sign of human weakness of the flesh. The marriages which the Reformers entered and the manner in which they entered them suggest quite the opposite from Brunner's suggestion that marriage is a sort of sacrament of /

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1 The subject is not one which Calvin or anyone else at the time pursued. But Calvin does not seem to have regretted his commentary on Seneca's"De Clementia".

2 "Justice and the Social Order".

3 "Nein". "Natural Theology", 85 ff.

of nature. Marriage is a sign of the sinfulness of even the priest, and the Reformed minister entered marriage partly at least as a sign that he was no better than his lay neighbour.[1] Both marrying and the state might be remedies for human sinfulness, but upon them could not be erected positive interpretations of God's law. To use the phrases of the modern controversy, the "Wortmächtigkeit" of man is not so much indicative of his "Offenbarungsmächtigkeit" as of his guilt. And this is the line that Calvin pursued in his preaching[2] and practice, as will be further discussed in dealing with the "uses and offices" of the Law. The unchristian person, in Calvin's view, was the person who was missing the truth - the unhappy, in fact the mad, person. It was the business of the pastor to bring home to him the unhappiness of his position, and it was the business of the Christian state to prevent the escape of the unbeliever /

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1 "It was the desirability of marriage in itself . . . rather than affection for any one person that awoke the thought of his own union in Calvin's mind." Walker, op. cit., 233. His description of the ideal wife is described in his letter to Farel, 19th May, 1539. [Herningjard, V, no. 789]. Yet her death remained a living sorrow [Reyburn, op. cit., 146]. Zwingli's marriage was a "clerical marriage". It was legalised in 1525 [Lindsay II, 38]. Knox's marriage to Marjorie Bowes appears in a similarly theological light [Laing III, 394-5]. Margaret Baxter's character and life is described by Isobel Butchart. Robert Graves wrote a novel on "Wife to Mr Milton". Milton's description of marriage in Eden stresses the superiority of the husband. "He for God only, she for God in him." (Par. Lost., IV, 299).

2 In INST. I, caps. 6 ff. Calvin argues the self-evidence of God's Word to the normal person. One illustration has a modern flavour, "Just as old men, and those suffering from ophthalmia, and all those who have bad eyesight, if you put before them even the finest book, although they recognise that something is written, can yet scarcely put two words together, but if they are helped by the interposition of spectacles will begin to read distinctly, so the Scripture . . ." If Calvin had known about the Isahara test for colour blindness he might have used it as an illustration, although strictly it is more aptly applicable to the distinction he draws between those who can believe and those who either because of mental deficiency or reprobation, are "inanus". It would be particularly applicable in those cases since it raises the question of a possible cure. The problem in preaching is nothing more than whether the preaching of the Word does interpose the cure for sin, or, to be more particular, how the preacher is so to present his message that the "spectacles" are firmly placed.

unbeliever from his unhappiness into a false delusion which would bring him to Hell. Hence in the Church discipline was the very nerve of its existence,[1] and hence also in the state there had to be mutual understanding with the Church. The problem of the unbeliever is, in short, not whether as an academic fact he "can" be saved, but why, as a practical fact, he is not saved. Calvin presumably could admit only two possibilities. The man might be "mad"[2] or rebellious. Not, of course, that theologically the Christian would accept even these alternatives to God's will. As Professor Souček has pointed out in a recent article[3] on Barth's "Dogmatik" sin may be a serious reality for human action but the Christian can never allow the suggestion that behind the human scenes God is defeated by sin. These are matters of God's inscrutable Providence. Here on earth we simply have to act according to the facts and lights which He ordains for us. The recalcitrant, Calvin bluntly concludes, must be forced to Christian laws of the Christian state, even if he is incapable of understanding them.

There is, of course, no "explanation" of this antinomy, and Calvin is content merely to state it as clearly as he can. "If lust, in which sin has its dominion," he says, "so enthrals us, that we are not free to obey our Father, there is no ground for pleading necessity as a defence, since this evil is within, and must be imputed to outselves."[4] One cannot, of course, /

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1 INST. 4: 12: 1.

2 "Mento alienati" INST. 1: 2: 1. Barth uses the term "Verrückt", Nein, p. 25.

3 Published in "The Scottish Journal of Theology", Vol. 2, No. 1.

4 There is another good reason for quoting this particular sentence. It occurs in a passage which does not materially change in any edition of the Institutes, from first to last. One sentence, indeed, remains verbatim.

Institutio, p. 45. Nec praetendere excusationem, licet, quod facultas desit, et velut exhausti debitores solvendo non simus. Culpa enim nostra est et peccati nostri, quod nos vinctos tenet, ne quod bene /

course, conceivably be enthralled by oneself, for "to enthral" implies both aggression and submission. If "lust" is the aggressor, what is the victim? Supposing what is elsewhere referred to as "conscience" is the victim, how can both be said to be parts of the unity of an individual? If, again, "lust" is the true "I", then there is no real responsibility since "conscience" is a foreign imposition which could only conquer by annihilation of the "I". Or if "conscience" is the true "I" then the question how "lust" comes in at all has to be raised. Tawney finds no meaning in this sort of sentence,[1] but his bewilderment is precisely what one would expect from a critic whose principle of judgment is human reason. Calvin here was intending to underline the dependence of his faith upon Divine revelation.

The acceptance of divine revelation as the basis of Christian conduct involves some of the hardest problems of theological definition. Christian revelation has five clearly distinct strands, the Old Testament and the New Testament as literary sources, the Church and the free inspiration of the Spirit as the "living" sources, and creation as the intellectual source. None can be ignored: the question rather is the order of their importance. Calvin and the Reformers generally subordinated the last three to the first two. Their primary concern was with the written Word, and on the whole /

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bene aut velimus agere aut possimus.

INST. 2: 8: 2. Nec praetendere excusationem licet, quod facultas desit, et velut exhausti debitores, solvendo non simus. . . . Quicquid a nobis exigat, quia non potest nisi rectum exigere, ex naturae obligatione obsequendi necessitas nos manet; quod autem non possumus, id vitii nostri est. A propria enim cupiditate, in qua peccatum regnat, si vincti tenemur, ne soluti simus in nostri Patris obsequuium, non est cum necessitatem pro defensione causemur, cuius malum et intra nos est et nobis imputandum.

Note. The phrase "naturae obligatione". On the view advanced here, nature is based essentially upon an illogical principle deriving from the mere fact of revelation.

[1] Op. cit., 108.

whole they appealed to Creation only as a system in which God could be found as the Author. Again, although they were upholders of the Church and upholders also of personal responsibility they had every reason, because of Rome on the one hand and the Anabaptists on the other, to be wary about Apostolic succession or prophetic utterance. In the matter of Scripture, however, they were less unanimous, and in this hesitancy they have had many successors in the Protestant tradition. E. F. Scott's article on the Commandments in Hasting's "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels" is characteristic of the careful avoidance which one makes of any suggestion that the Decalogue is to be binding upon the Christian conscience. It is even possible to conclude that a "new" law of life is to be found in the Gospel. This is a less adequate conclusion than Luther's, namely that in the spirit of faith the believer will constantly be instructed in the details of many Decalogues, but it is similar in its desire to avoid on the one hand a mere submergence of Christ into the Old Testament and on the other the mere demolition of all Christian duty [redacted].

Calvin's treatment of Scripture will be dealt with more specifically in a later section, and the present remarks are intended merely to determine the standards by which these views are to be received. This preparation is important in so far as criticism of Calvin is associated with a particular kind of criticism of the Old Testament. Brunner, in an important article, "Die Bedeutung des Alten Testaments für unsern Glauben"[1] remarks upon the significance of Harnack's last great work, which was a study /

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[1] Zwischen den Zeiten, 1930, Hft. I, pp. 30 ff.

study of Marcion. Harnack, Brunner says, reflected Schleiermacher's views on the Old Testament which he summarises as having only a more particular reference - a reference of historical causation - to him than non-Biblical religions. That is to say, it was merely the accident of history which made the Old Testament relevant to Schleiermacher's Christian faith. He could have reached the same faith through other religions provided the New Testament were placed at the climax. As Brunner remarks, such a view, strictly speaking, gives no meaning for Christian faith to the Old Testament. It is merely a particular manifestation of God to particular circumstances.[1]

Schleiermacher could not, of course, have said what he did about himself had his Protestant heritage not been firmly based upon the relevance to faith of the Old Testament. It is significant, incidentally, that in the revival of evangelical faith books upon Marcion,[2] but written from the traditional anti-Marcionite angle, are commoner. Whatever may be the manner of interpreting the Old Testament - and Calvin invoked the principles of charity and equity[3] - Calvin's Protestantism was firmly rooted in the particular revelation of God to His own people.[4] The Bible to Calvin was a unity, a tradition into which Christian believers were brought. Therefore the revealed Will of God - the Decalogue - belonged for him to the body of eternal revelation which embraces the Creation and the Covenant of Grace, that /

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[1] A similar view was noted in Chapter I where pagan sacrifice is suggested as the "Old Testament of the Pagans", p. 13, note .

[2] See Expository Times, LXI, no. 8, pp. 238 ff.

[3] Brunner, op. cit., p. 241, charity being the New Testament norm, equity the refernce to God's timeless command.

[4] INST. 2: caps. 9 - 11, bring out this point decisively. Calvin bases his argument on the Scriptural implications of God's dealings with His people, which, Calvin emphasises, always points to a fulfilment beyond the immediate occasion.

that is to say, in his preaching he might touch on the most diverse matters of practical import, but the exhortation derived from the principles of the divine Will as revealed in Scripture, and to a less degree, in Christian experience. It was based upon the dogma that the religion of Jesus as deposited in Scripture, was the only true expression of the One True God's eternal Will for all mankind.

Calvin was not the only one concerning himself with the problems of Christian discipline in these Reformation years. Apart from any interest that the Reformers might have in the formulation of their distinctive views, the problem of Church doctrine and especially of Church discipline were of constant importance in the Christian civilisation of the middle age itself; and particularly in these early years of the 16th century, when the prestige of the Church was at a low and falling ebb, it was the concern of serious minded men to enhance it by a restoration of true Christian piety. One of the most significant results of the Protestant Reformation was the work of Calvin's contemporary, Loyola, in re-establishing lay respect for Rome through the discipline of the priesthood and the propagation of the faith. Calvin belonged, like Loyola, to the second generation of those who followed the Lutheran movement, and for that reason if for no other was able to give a wider view of the whole. The "Institutes" is generally regarded as head and shoulders above anything that was done previously and most of what has since been done, to express the theological and the ethical implications of justification by faith; but it was not without predecessors and contemporaries in the elucidation of the fundamental problems. Such a declaration was indeed necessary by the very nature of the Protestant movement. It had adversaries, armed with an authority consecrated by ten centuries, who charged the movement with blasphemy and with the intention of overthrowing all order, human and divine; and it had what one now would call "fellow-travellers" - loose partisans who took what they wanted from the movement without acknowledging the discipline of membership with it; these /

these were the Anabaptists, with whom the Reformers were constantly being identified and from whom they made the greatest efforts to dissociate themselves; consequently it was necessary to clarify to the true friends of Reform its moral righteousness and its social stability.

Mention has been made of the early development of the Reformed liturgy. Protestant dogmatics and ethics evolved with the same conservative reluctance to break with the past and the same internal pressure of conscience to do so. Sometimes the credit for the first effort is given to Melanchthon with his "Loci Communes" published in 1521; but in this study some consideration will be given first to Luther's own contribution in his treatise "Of Good Works" which originated in a series of sermons in 1520. Both of these publications were accidental in the sense that they arose from material delivered casually from the spoken word. Zwingli's apologia "De vera et falsa religione commentarius" published in 1525 was a clearer definition of the faith made for Italian and French refugees in Zurich. Farel's "Summaire briefue declaration daucuns lieux fort necessaires a un chascun Chrestien pour mettre sa confiance en Dieu et ayder son prochain" written in 1524 possibly for his church of French refugees[1] in Basel, and later re-edited in 1534 to re-inforce the work which he was beginning in Geneva, is an example of the explicit defence of the movement in the French language. Bucer, first of Strasburg and latterly in England, expressed in his last work, "De Regno Christi", the problems of Church and state in terms of English history. These works are /

[1] Heyer, "Guillaume Farel" (1872) pp. 18ff, describes some of these refugees.

are not all of equal importance, and all do not express the same comprehensiveness of design. Zwingli's work, for example, is concerned mainly with the errors of transubstantiation; Bucer's is quite a social philosophy. But the mark of Reform is upon them all, for they all return to the necessity of direct individual responsibility to God.

Luther did not impose himself as a reformer upon the Church. Without any personal ambition he reached the position by an inward necessity. It is not necessary to trace his early life; the point at which this study can begin is his appointment by the Wittenburg city council to be the permanent substitute for Simon Heinse, one of the city pastors. Till then Luther had been obliged to preach only occasionally in the convent, and had therefore been confined in the expression of his opinions by the occasion and the limitations of his university teaching. But his new appointment narrowed his theology to practical issues and widened it to an application beyond the piety of convent life. He had now the direct responsibility of setting human souls unprotected from the world by a spiritual "calling" upon the way of salvation.[1] The responsibility not only crystalised his earlier teaching; it precipitated his first literary works. In his lectures on the Psalms, begun in 1513, he had declared his conviction in the justifying power of faith; and this view was re-emphasised in his "Epistle to the Romans" (1515-16). Then in 1517 he published his first independent work, the "Explanation of the Seven Penitential Psalms" - his object being to edify the congregation with which he had been entrusted. In the same year came the famous Ninety five Theses against /

[1] Much of this preaching concerned both the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer (i.e., the traditional basis of lay morality as laid down in the Prone). Between 1517 and 1519 several of these sermons were published - see W.A.1.

against Indulgences, occasioned by the competitive offers of salvation by Tetzel to the people of the town. Tetzel being on official papal business the Theses were virtually a challenge to the papacy itself, but Luther sustained it from the authority which he believed he held from God for the right direction of God's people to salvation.

Nevertheless the challenge to the papacy meant a challenge to both the theology and the politics of the Holy See. In the following years Luther was brought into controversy with a widening circle of scholarship and began to pour out a series of tracts on such subjects as the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, confession, meditation on the Passion, marriage, usury, the preparation for death, baptism, excommunication, and so on - all subjects which would arise in the mind of a man wrestling not only with theological abstractions but with the daily questions of faith in contact with the world. The work selected to represent Luther belongs to this period. The treatise "Of Good Works" arose from his interest in the Decalogue from a preaching point of view, but in its published form had a wider consideration.[1] George Spalatin was court preacher to the Elector and it was on his recommendation that Luther put together his thoughts on the ethics of Reform, dedicating the work to John, brother of the reigning Elector and destined to succeed him in 1525. Both the dedication and much of the contents of the work reflect the same concern as moved Calvin also to dedicate his work to a prince.[2] The Duke of Saxony, George, had heard Luther preach in Dresden and had formed an adverse opinion of the doctrine of justification by faith alone on the grounds that it opened up /

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[1] See W.A. VI, 166-7 for an introduction.

[2] Calvin and Zwingli both dedicated works to Francis I of France.

up the opportunity for anarchy; and, whatever the papacy had done or left undone, its interest was always on the side of authority, so that one had only to placate Rome to maintain order amongst the faithful. The doctrine of direct personal responsibility to God alone, however, carried the implication that individuals were not responsible to any intermediary, and this doctrine could be interpreted in terms destructive of civil as well as ecclesiastical obedience. Some persons had already interpreted the matter so; and many others were unjustly accused of doing so. It became necessary therefore for the Reformers to explain that although "good works" were spiritually useless, yet in fact a Christian believer would be the best of citizens; for, although good works do not imply the existence of faith, faith implies the doing of good works.

As might be expected, Luther was conservative in his political views. The treatise "Of Good Works" is an appeal for personal righteousness,[1] the Decalogue being taken as a pattern of the sort of life that God has shown that He desires men to follow if they would be His servants. But the appeal is to men and women in their own sphere of life. What Luther achieves therefore is a striking emphasis upon the significance of personal righteousness even where the individual person has no political significance. At its best, this doctrine brings into the existing social group something of the brightness of primitive innocence ; at the worst it becomes mere platitude divorced from necessary /

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[1] In his introduction to the Great Catechism of 1529, he says everyone ought to know and understand the Ten Commandments, the Apostle's Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, because they comprise in brief the content of Scripture. This reference is to the "lay" morality that has already been described as the object of the Prone .

necessary action.[1] The issue depends upon the state of existing social conditions and the good will of the government. In short, Luther fits his teaching into the setting of a fairly prosperous agricultural community which can satisfy its own needs and which is on good terms with the reigning squire. The situation is remote from the urban interests and ambitions of Geneva and the doctrinaire ethics of a congregation of religious refugees. In the one case there was no desire for self government but the desire for a good prince; on the other, there was not only the desire and ambition for self control but the historical and political necessity for it.

The treatise has two strata. In the first place it is an appeal to believers to exercise their faith in a practical manner; in the second it is an appeal to the prince to create and maintain the conditions of the personal good life. In both cases the basis is the religious factor of "faith". Faith is the principle which distinguishes works that are truly good from those which only appear to be good;[2] but this principle is not equivalent to knowledge of what is good and what is not good. Knowledge of the good is derived from "the commandments of God", which lie open to all who have normal understanding. Faith is rather the "reaction"[3] of the human soul to those high commandments, /

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[1] Luther actually said that man in his primeval innocence had no need of government, e.g., W.A. XII, 329, "Wenn nicht bose leut weren, so durfft man keynen ubirkeytt." This view of government was the traditional medieval idea. Sometimes Luther suggests, however, that even in Paradise there might have been a governmental relationship. E.g. W.A. XLII, 62, 'septimo die mane videtus Adam audivisse Dominum mandantem curam oeconomicam et politicam cum prohibitione pomi."

[2] W.A. VI, 204: "Zum ersten ist zu wissen, das kein gutte Werken sein, dan allein die Got geboten hat", etc.

[3] Ibid., 205: "dan wie ihr gewissen gegen Got stehet und glaubet, szo sein die werck auch, die darausz geschehn".

commandments, and depends upon God's dynamic Spirit rather than His written Law. The place of the Law in good works therefore is, as Calvin also agrees, in its fostering of a sense of human dependence upon one's Creator, and it is this humility which distinguishes truly good works from those works which are called "good" because of their appearance, magnitude, number, or the praise they receive of men, such good works as visiting shrines, pilgrimages to Rome, mere bodily attendance at the saying of the service, collection of vestments and jewels, "so-called, self elected works".[1] True faith expresses itself in the domestic virtues of honesty and obedience in the conduct of one's daily labour or business. The social problem of the times, Luther pertinently says, is that "virtue" has become a series of ordinances possible only to those with leisure to perform them - a hobby, in fact - and is no longer that flavour which should pervade the doing of all duties as ever in the Great Task-master's eye.[2]

Faith is not a mechanical activity. "When a man and woman love and are pleased with each other, and thoroughly believe in their love, who teaches them how they are to behave, what they are to do, leave undone, say, not say, think?"[3] They are controlled not by a "law" but by love. This idea of faith was not new. There had long been a distinction drawn between "fides informis" - the faith of intellectual acknowledgment /

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1 Ibid., 211.

2 Ibid., 205: The distinction is between the work a man does as his trade and religious actions like praying, fasting, etc. Luther's view is that all works done in faith are good.

3 Ibid., 207: This is the distinction between law and love that plays so large a part in Lutheran theology.

acknowledgment without any signs of grace in conduct - and "fides formata" - the faith that is actively directed towards the beloved Saviour; and in Luther's time everyone who was seriously interested in religious questions pursued this latter faith. Luther speaks of it as "the true fulfilment of the first commandment". Luther in short distinguishes mere obedience to the Church from that true obedience that comes from personal love of God, and is already on the way to limitation of the Church as the object of a man's inmost responsibility. The knowledge of the good is a direct possibility and the obedience demanded is a personal responsibility to God. But faith issues in distinctive actions; it is the "best work" from which all truly good works depend. And the good works which he has in mind may be summed up in the phrase "good citizenship" such as a prince would want to find in his subjects.

The doctrine looks quite innocuous from a prince's point of view, and yet Duke George had exclaimed against Luther's admission of some rightness in Wiclif and Hus, "God help us, the plague". On the assumption that the Christian congregation would remain content with the authority of the ruling prince, the doctrine was indeed innocuous; all the more so as the prince was of the same mind as Luther and the people, that the papal "officiales" were knaves.[1] But one never knew where the question of ethical authority would lead. With an ecclesiastical institution one could enter into a concordat and rest assured that the Church would honour the contract as honestly as any other institution might. And thus one could indirectly buy an assured obedience /

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[1] W.A., VI, 228.

obedience of the people through the priest. But if "good" works were to be illustrated from a Book which it would be left to every man to read for himself, there was no saying when someone would begin, on the authority of that Book, to criticise the doings of the prince himself. This became a prime issue in the Reformation, involving not only the practical question of dissociation from Anabaptist anarchism, but as a consequence, a radical reinterpretation of the whole doctrine of Christian conduct. Luther's contribution was of a more modest scope than Calvin's despite the fact that he seems to have described human nature in just as realistic blackness.[1] The difference is that Luther never emancipated himself from the belief that his so well known surroundings could be restored to the romantic happiness of the "good old days", while Calvin, himself an exile living amongst exiles in the political upheaval of Geneva, was more detached in his judgment even of kings and princes. For all the diplomatic defence of sovereignty which Calvin and Calvinists maintained, Queen Elizabeth was quite right in suspecting her Puritan subjects of desiring a change of policy in her government.[2] But the feudal system was part of the Kingdom of God for Luther. The "inner" ethics of personal love, therefore, became increasingly distinct from the working of the "outer" authority of government; and by this detachment from affairs of state, Luther is open to the criticism that he ignored the central problem of all Christian ethics, that of "justice".

The consideration of the commandments themselves falls within this limitation. The first three are all taken as illustrations of the necessity /

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[1] See above, p. 81, note 2.

[2] Scott Pearson, op. cit., pp. 62-3.

necessity of faith in proper Christian obedience. The honour of God, for example, can be performed by any "poor man, in whom no one can see many great works, in the privacy of his home".[1] Indeed, "temporal honour and praise" are even a danger to faith since a man is always tempted to take flattery too seriously. The attainment of honour is not in itself an evil but virtue must be loved for itself, just as children may be bribed to attend church at an age when they cannot be expected to understand the implications of worship, but should be taught at last to go for the worship itself.[2] Of course even the virtuous may fall, but the Church is wrong in emphasizing too much the threatenings of God, for there is always the opportunity of reinstatement; so that another "work" of the commandment is to preserve the constancy of humble faith in God's redemption.[3] Within its limits, Luther's doctrine of obedience is realistic enough. His "faith" is not a hothouse plant. It belongs to the real world of moral challenge in work, marriage, business and so on;[4] and it culminates in the chief "good work" of bearing a witness for righteousness even against the rich and powerful. Silence before injustice is a sin not to be atoned by much pilgrimaging. But the witness is the sort of thing that one finds in novels, where the poor man defies the local rich man, the implication being that, behind the rich man there lies an accepted principle of law which he as an individual is transgressing and which in the last resort is upheld by the powers that be.[5] There is no criticism of the powers that be.

The above paragraphs are based upon the first section of the treatise /

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1 W.A., VI, 218.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., 222
4 Ibid., 224
5 Ibid., 228-9. See Note 7 at end.

treatise and contain the principle of the whole.[1] The remaining considerations of the Decalogue certainly afford an outline of a Christian pattern of conduct, but compared with Calvin's bold principles, the lines are faint. Of the Sabbath, for example,[2] he says that attendance at Mass is a necessary part of Christian virtue and an excellent scope for the exercise of immediate faith in God. But faith includes assent in "what Christ has said (about the bread and the wine)", that is, "hoc est Corpus Meum". It is thus not the Mass itself that is at fault but the lack of faith in the worshippers, both lay and cleric. The Mass is beyond dispute and beyond the possibility of dispute. This conservatism is typical of the man, but it is not perhaps so divergent from Calvin as one might think. Luther did criticise the Mass for its "oblationary" tendencies. Moreover, the "morning service" of the Reformers was based upon the Mass, and a modern Congregational scholar[3] has endorsed their acceptance of the Canon. Dealing with other aspects of worship, - prayer, sermon, Lord's day observance, fasting - Luther lays what one would now call an "evangelical" emphasis, that is, with the constant concern of personal responsibility and obedience. Sermons, for example, should be based upon "the Gospel and His testament" and not upon any, perhaps non-Scriptural, theme that the preacher thinks fit.[4] The holiness of the day, again, should be re-emphasised. "Would to God," he says,[5] "that in Christendom there were no holiday except the Sunday . . . then would many evil vices be done away with the labour of workdays." Luther thought over much holidaying led to industrial restlessness.

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1 See Note 8 at end.
2 W.A. VI., 229.
3 Bernard Manning "Hymns of Wesley and Watts" (1942).
4 Ibid., 230 "die predigt nit anders sein, dan die Vorkundigung dises Testaments."
5 Ibid., 243.

The greatest stress of the second table[1] of the Law is the duty to do "honour". Under this head falls the faithful performance of duties by children to parents and in general by subordinates to superiors in church and state.[2] This discussion is out of all proportion to that of the remaining heads, and although it attacks the abuses of the Church, it still leaves to "spiritual authority"[3] to "look to it that adultery, unchastity, usury, gluttony, worldly show, excessive adornment and such like open sin and shame might be most severely punished and corrected"; and to manage properly "the endowments, monastic houses, parishes and schools". The connection between these duties of the Church and the commandment under consideration is that the Church is the spiritual parent of the believers, and the implication is that the present order of the Church is not doing its duty. Reformers of all parties agreed on this view. What they were not agreed upon was the authority which should correct the existing church order. Luther makes one suggestion of resistance. Against the misuses of ecclesiastical revenues "we" -[4] that is, presumably, the faithful believers - "are in duty bound to resist" as children must resist parents who are insane. The nature of the resistance is first "humbly to call upon God for help" then "to send the courtesans (of Rome) about their business." Significantly, the leaders against these "true Turks" are to be "the kings, princes and nobility". "Thus", he concludes,[5] "we are to honour Roman authority as our highest father; and yet, since they have gone mad and lost their senses, /

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1 This is another separate section of the treatise under the title "Folget die andere Tapfel. Das erst Gebot der ander Tapfel Mosi".

2 Ibid., 250-265.

3 Ibid., 255. "Es solt aber geistlich gewalt, etc. . . . "

4 Ibid., 257. "sein wir furwar schuldig, im "szo vil wir mugen, zuglich widderzustehen, und mussen hie thun, gleich, wie die frumen kinder . . "

5 Ibid., 258.

senses, not allow them to do what they attempt, lest Christendom be destroyed thereby". Luther however does not find the solution in another council.[1] Councils have the weakness of being part of the Church. The reforming force must come from outside, must be temporal force. Thus obedience to temporal authority, whether just or unjust, becomes a tenet of his faith. Unless it force us "to do wrong against God or man" its injustice is a matter of the body and cannot harm - indeed may even improve - the soul. Even the unjust power of the state is thus a less evil than the unjust power of the Church, which "has to do with preaching".

There is much that is both true and right in these remarks, much that other Reformers also said. Perhaps their main value is the reminder that the Church is always the Church, and is never the constitution merely of human desire - even human desire to make improvement. The main criticism of the treatment is that it is itself uncritical. This treatment of the Decalogue is certainly "catechetical", because one feels that Luther simply applies to the Decalogue for confirmation and examples of that which he already believes on other - perhaps admirable but not religious - grounds. Calvin is much more realistic in his treatment. The Decalogue is for him itself the source of his principles. One feels that Luther - like Hegel in the nineteenth century - never reached a point /

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1 In the address 'an den Christlichen Adel deutschen Nation' (1520) Luther did summon the German nobility to call a Council, but not as a legislative body. It would, Luther thought, enforce the commands of Scripture. W.A., VI, 413.

point outside his own social circle, and would never have questioned the established feudal relationships as eternal ordinances of God. Calvin was a cautious social philosopher but he had hit upon a doctrine of inspiration - by the H oly Ghost through the courts of believers - which gave possibilities of great development in social criticism by the free Christian conscience of the community. Luther's interest constantly turns away from the main theme of the Commandments to long discourses upon the duties of princes. They are not, he admits, absolute in the exercise of their will, being themselves under the obligation to offer God a sacrifice of faith. But the remedy for the evil of the times - the lack of "real government in the world . . . (for) no one wants to work"[1] - is in their hands. The summary of all is the duty to show "obedience and considerateness" - obedience by the subjects, considerateness by the princes. Only in the last resort is there a final reminder that if our obedience to God is compromised by the demanded obedience of men, then we ought to obey God rather than men.[2]

The space which Luther devotes to his remaining six commandments[3] is suitably indicated by the brief notice that will here be given. Faith which does not doubt that God is gracious will find no difficulty in being /

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1 Ibid., 262. ". . . kein regiment in der Welt ist. Niemant wil erbeuten."

2 Ibid., 265. This view was expounded also in the 'von weltlicher Oberkeit' (1523). It differs from Calvin's view in being largely negative. Calvin distrusted individual action, but he sought to control the ruler through the magistrates, and as the magistrates were elected by the church members acting as citizens, there remained a real democratic sanction of magisterial and even of monarchical action.

3 Ibid., 265 - 276.

being gracious towards one's neighbour. The existence of enemies is important not so much objectively, that is, of themselves, as subjectively, that is as an occasion for developing the grace of meekness in the Christian. Nevertheless, it is not fitting that the magistrate should idly allow sin to have sway.[1] By faith too shall we escape unchaste thoughts, but the struggle against unchastity is bound up with the practice of other good works, such as early rising, continual occupation, and above all prayer and meditation upon the Scripture. It is a monkish prescription for a monkish evil. So, too, when the heart trusts in the divine favour, it cannot seek after the temporal goods of others, nor cleave to money, but will use money with cheerful liberality for the benefit of others. It is a commandment which leads to many good works and can be summarised in the idea of "Mildigkeit" - [2] benevolence. But, Luther adds, "the magistrates and cities ought to see to it that the vagabonds, pilgrims and mendicants from foreign lands be debarred, or at least allowed only under restrictions and rules." Faith too promotes courage which will always defend the truth in worldly and spiritual matters. Of the latter he remarks that if it "were attacked by peasants, herdsmen, stable-boys and men of no standing, who would not be willing . . . to confess it and bear witness to it? But when the pope and the bishops, together with princes and kings attack it, all men flee, keep silent, and dissemble . . ."[3], because their faith in God /

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1 Ibid., 272.

2 Ibid., 273.

3 Ibid., 275.

God is less than their love of goods, honour, favour and life. The last two commandments forbid evil desires of the body for pleasure and for temporal goods and "are clear in themselves"; and yet, "no one has ever been so holy that he felt in himself no evil inclination . . . for original sin is born in us by nature" and may only, this side of death, be checked, not conquered.[1]

Even this brief review of a single work of Luther shows how close he was in one sense to Calvin and in another how far away. There are many reflections of the one in the other; and even the single paragraph above has phrases which recall similar views expressed by Calvin - such as the necessity for prayer and meditation, and the doctrine of original sin in human nature. But there is a wide cleavage between the practical conclusions which each man draws. Luther's desire for a closed society, for example, reflects the medieval inability to cope with commercial competition. Trade was not a natural part of the social system[2] that rested upon the basis of land-owning and the duties of land owners and land tillers. Tradesmen had a constant struggle to get reasonable terms for the conduct of their business whether at home or through the customs for overseas; and legally their only defence was an increasing development of their "persona" - their communal rights and duties in relation to the other "personae" of Church and state. Doubtless this fiction was necessary for existence in the restricted society /

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[1] Ibid., 276.

[2] Luther's sermon (1519) and tract (1524) on usury (W.A. VI, 36 ff) quite frankly say that if business were conducted in a Christian manner there would be no traders. His idea of trade is as a public service rather than as a system of competition in a free market of buyer and seller. There is to be neither surety, lending or credit. Trade is a direct exchange between individuals. Whatever demerits this system may have by its oversimplicity, Luther at least emphasises that it referred to all Christian life: it was not simply a counsel of perfection.

society of the period, but it was doomed to a change in the society that was being born in the 16th century. Calvin happened to be situated in the heart of the new birth; Luther was not, and in this accident perhaps lies the real distinction between the two.

There is, however, another sense in which Luther differed from Calvin. The problem of authority is ultimately the problem of Scripture, and all that Luther has been saying against the claims of people like Tetzel inevitably raised the question, by what authority did he so speak? In his earlier phases Luther believed that his reference to Scripture was not contrary to the papal authority[1] - that, in short, the Pope himself rested upon the authority of Scripture. When this view was disproved, Luther was forced to decide whether the authority he derived was to be found in Scripture in itself or in the "Gemeinde",[2] that is, the fellowship of believers. For all he said about Scripture he did not achieve a satisfactory interpretation of what is commonly regarded as such, namely, the canonical books. Fundamentally he rejected the "Law" in favour of the "Gospel"[3] on the ground that Law inevitably leads to damnation, and may therefore be a useful means of coming to Christ, but that Law is swallowed up in the Gospel. Hence his scornful rejection of JAMES as being mere legalism;[4] hence also his high opinion of ROMANS and his search in the Old Testament for types of Christ. The weakness of the view is apparent. Christian authority rested ultimately upon the experience of the visible Christian /

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1 See Davies, op. cit., 29ff.
2 W.A. XI, 408-16.
3 W.A. 18: 654-7.
4 Tischreden

Christian church, the lay morality of the Prone worship. It was thus open to the sentimentalism and disappointment of the peasants' instability; it was also open to abuse should the "Landesherren" cease to be what Luther assumed they were - Christian believers. It is interesting to note that the Norwegian Church,[1] in the late occupation, faced precisely this problem. Calvin saw through this difficulty and sought in the concept of law a positive value. Law is the order of God from eternity, and thus Christ is in the Law. Thus the obedience of Christ is a possibility co-extensive with divine Creation.

(ii)

Melanchthon's theological thought is sufficiently like that of Luther to be regarded as part of the Lutheran tradition. He was, indeed, a friend and fellow citizen of Luther, but, unlike him, was not called to pastoral charge. Nor was he, like Zwingli, Farel and Calvin, called to the political responsibility of a social revolution. His contribution was scholarly, analytical. A student of Reuchlin and Oecolampadius, he set alongside the fervour of Luther the critical insight of Renaissance learning. What he attempted to do for Protestantism was "what Averroes did for Islam and Moses Maimonides did for Judaism and what Thomas did for Catholicism in the middle age: to resolve the problem of how a thinking person can harmonise philosophy and science with the beliefs of faith.[2]

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[1] See below pp. 307 ff.

[2] C. L. Hill, "The Loci Communes of Philip Melanchthon" (1944), p. 39.

He was thus the philosopher, as Luther was the prophet and Calvin the statesman, of the Reformation.

The doctrine most significant for the ethics of Melanchthon was the notion of "natural light". Underneath the first principles of every science, he says, are certain ideas, innate in all men, implanted by God.[1] This is no doubt a doctrine necessary for the Christian emphasis upon universal responsibility.[2] Christian faith is not a mystery confined to a particular kind of person. On the contrary, Christian theology can become committed to the most extreme expression of predestination for no other reason than that it strives to cover the case of the "reprobate" who refuse to acknowledge belief and membership of the Church. It is clear that Christian dogma must assume something about unsaved human nature, something in the creative purpose of the Almighty, which causes us to be incapable of ignorance of, and therefore responsible towards, His divine Will. Predestination however is not characteristic of Melanchthon or Zwingli as it is of Calvin. To them the universal implication of the divine Will is sufficiently guaranteed by the assumption of human rationality corresponding to the knowledge of, or at least the acceptance of revelation about, God, accompanied by the irrational assumption of Christian inclination to obedience.[3] Calvin questioned both assumptions, replacing the former largely, though not wholly, with his doctrine of predestination - thus referring the universal problem of man to the hidden/

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1 E.G. Liber de Anima, C. R. XIII, 7. " Veras noticias divinitus nobis insitas." The phrase is frequent in his other works, e.g., Decl. de Legum Fontibus et Causis, C.R. XI, 921-2 - "radii sapientiae divinae in nos transfusi".

2 Zwingli refers to the "inner man" in his argument 'von der Klarheit und Gewissheit des Wortes Gottes', 1522. C.R.L.XXXVIII, 338-84. Calvin refers to God's Law as written upon the heart of men. Inst. 2: 8: 1.

3 Ibid., 124. In discussing the Decalogue Melanchthon says of the second table that the precepts merely exemplify Christ's Word, "Love thy neighbour as thyself" and "may be left to the diligent reader himself" (diligens lector) to interpret from his reading of the Gospel.

hidden counsel of God - and the latter by a discipline imposed even upon professed believers.

These doctrines however are in a sense secondary, in development if not in importance, to the fundamental challenge which the Protestant movement gave to Rome. Melanchthon rejected the claims of the "Sophists", the "Parisians",[1] to enforce what he called their "opinions" upon the conscience of the believer. Zwingli also repudiated the Sorbonne theology, and Calvin, in the first edition of the "Institutes", expressly distinguishes the two Scriptural, from the five false,[2] sacraments. The ground of the rejection was the primacy of faith, and faith directed the human soul to the liberty of Christ. The first development in all these theological arguments had to be a distinction between Law and Gospel.

Some laws, Melanchthon says, are natural, others divine, still others human. Of natural laws he concluded that the very term "natural" ought to mean that they can be collected and analysed by a method of human reasoning through a natural syllogism;[3] but, he adds significantly, "that is precisely what I have not as yet seen done by anyone, and I by no means know whether it can be done at all, since our human reason is so enslaved and blinded."[4] This natural law had two strands; there was that which /

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[1] I.e., the Sorbonne theologians.

[2] falsis sacramentis.

[3] C.R. XXI, 116 " . . . nam cum naturales dicantur, oportebat a rationis humanae methode earum formulas colligi per naturalem syllogismum". One is reminded of the Cartesian method of the 17th century.

[4] Ibid., 123. Impleri non potest dum in carne vivimus hoc praeceptum at non ideo, non exigitur, sed omnes rei sumus dum non persolvimus quo debemus."

which might be ascribed particularly to Adam and the descendants of Adam,[1] such as knowledge of good and evil; and there was that which might be called strictly natural, imprinted upon human minds as such by God the Creator, namely,[2] that God ought to be revered, that, because we are born into a definite society of life no man ought to be injured, and that human society demands a certain community of interest and sympathy. One can only comment upon such a definition that it no doubt does permit the conclusion[3] that the Decalogue and natural law are identical but that it begs the vital question of human sin. The whole issue between Calvinism and the other forms of Protestant theology is that Calvin tries to make the relationship between human sin and human responsibility something more than mere words.

Divine law comprises[4] "laws ordained by God in the Canonical Scriptures". "There are three orders of divine laws: some are moral, some judicial, others ceremonial." Moral laws are those prescribed in the Decalogue[5] which is the compendium of all moral law in Scripture and which is of eternal significance. Human laws are those which may be made for convenience by magistrates or even by the Church for the purpose of attaining specific minor ends.[6] Monastic celibacy, for example, was a matter of convenience /

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1 Ibid., 417. "Promissio de Christo et beneficiis Christi primum revelata est Adae."

2 Ibid., 117.

3 Ibid., 417. "Una est lex et natura nota omnibus gentibus atque aetatibus".

4 Ibid., 120.

5 Ibid., 391. "Ideo omnia moralia praecepta in decalogum indudimus . . . hac sententiae, cum sint notitiae in natura scripta, non possunt abrogari, sed durant cum ipsa hominis natura."

6 Ibid., 130. "Civiles (leges) quas in re publica sanctiunt magistratus, principes, reges, civitates." "Dei enim minister magistratus, ultor ad iram ei qui deliquerit. Porro non licet magistratui statuere adversus ius divinum, nec obtemperari adversus ius divinium debet."

convenience when the monastery was a school, but the pontifical demand for a celibate clergy, as if celibacy were a virtue in itself, is mere presumption. Like all laws, the law of the Church is to be judged by the divine law.[1]

What is the divine Law? The Scriptures clearly indicate a judicial, a ceremonial, and a moral law. The first and second are equally clearly, somehow or another "abrogated" in the Gospel. Of the former, Melanchthon says that Christian believers no longer require forensic judgment since they are under the law of love:[2] for example, they do not have to consider self assertion nor the problems of private property since poverty - that is, concern for all - is laid upon all.[3] The latter are, of course, mysteries of the Gospel and, consequently, fulfilled in the Person and Work of Christ.[4] It should be added that Melanchthon, like Calvin, perceived the necessity of avoiding a rigid separation of the Old and New Testaments into Law and Gospel, as if they were opposites. Each Testament contains both Law and Gospel. Their difference is not one of time but of condition. The issue therefore is between Christian obedience to the divine Will and the universal responsibility to show that obedience, between grace and sin.[5]

With the papacy dismissed and civil law exalted to the ministry of God, Melanchthon was faced with the question, who was to guide the magistrate. /

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1 Ibid., 131.
2 Ibid., 129.
3 Ibid., 127. That is to say "poverty" does not mean "owning nothing" but "holding in stewardship" for the mitigation of another's want. Thus Melanchthon seems to preach a sort of communism, but a communism administered by individual stewards.
4 Ibid., 129.
5 Ibid., 144.

magistrate. Clearly such guidance would depend upon the Word of God. Scripture however could not be regarded as in itself a compendium of knowledge because the teaching of Scripture itself involved abrogation of some of its own strata. The object of Scripture, in other words, was the creation and nurture of faith in men, and only through men, in states. To say this is not of course to say that individual speculation should pass for God's truth.[1] There was a plain and simple sense of Scripture and Melanchthon assumed that it could and would be reached by the natural intelligence of men. The problem rather was how Christian men would use the knowledge gained. Melanchthon's answer[2] is that while "those who do not have the Spirit of Christ can by no means do the law", and thus remain in the guilt of which the law condemns us all, yet "they who have been renewed by the Spirit of Christ, going of their own accord even without the law dictating, are led to do those things which the law has ordered."

Logically the argument is unassailable. It accounts for human responsibility - that is, for "Nature" - and it accounts for the paedagogics of the divine revelation. It also accounts for the final revelation of God in Christ and the "motion" of the Holy Spirit in faith. What it does not adequately account for is human "concupiscence". From a different motive emerges the same pietism that can be found in Luther, the same idyllic eulogy of the ordinary man and the same danger of reaction into harshness /

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1 Ibid., 131 ff. "Negat Petrus privatae, hoc est, humanae expositionis esse Scripturae interpretationem."

2 Ibid., 222.

harshness. Calvin was less romantic. He had a favourite proverb about Geneva - "à rude âne rude annier".[1] Geneva was a theocratic society - a society of professing Christians, but it still needed discipline. To Calvin the Christian life needs a Christian Decalogue. In short, agreeing with Melanchthon that the law is beyond the possibility of obedience, and agreeing also that the Christian is open to the motion of the Spirit, he does not agree that the believer is, (at least without constant vigilance) able to receive the truth of the Spirit. The Church is not perfect, as the State is not perfect, and as the believer is not perfect. The urgency of faith and the opposition of the flesh is a continual warfare.[2]

It is worth noting that in the second and third periods of development, the "Loci" pays an increasing attention to the Decalogue. In the period 1535-41, for example, consideration of the Decalogue had extended to a short account of the two tables and also to each commandment.[3] The division was between "the exterior and the interior worship (cultum) of God", "interior and exterior service of neighbours (opera erga proximos)". The first table emphasised the opposite principles of perfect obedience and corrupt nature,[4] and the only solvent, "Christus est consummatio Legis." The remainder of the First Table, therefore, concerns the proper attitude of worship - "de propriis effectibus fidei" and the proper ministry of the word.[5] The conclusion[6] is "Wherefore it is not /

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1 Doumergue, "Jean Calvin" (1917) V, 206.
2 INST., 2: 7: 12.
3 C.R. XXI 392 ff.
4 Ibid., 393 "perfectam obedientam" and "vitiata natura".
5 Ibid., 393.
6 Ibid., 394-5.

not a slight error to say that this whole precept refers to the Jews, so that meanwhile the ordinary man ( vulgus ) may neglect Evangelical ceremonial and the ministry of the Gospel."

1535 dates the first edition of the "Institutes" and one cannot but conclude that Melanchthon was not uninfluenced by the emphasis Calvin had laid upon the Decalogue. 1541 is yet outside the beginning of Calvin's domination of Geneva, and is thus not yet confronted with the serious problem of Christian social construction. It is therefore not surprising to find Melanchthon - like Calvin himself in the first editions - emphasising the personal rather than the social implications of God's Law. Of the second tables he says,[1] "To this Law belong the highest virtues, namely, to serve in one's calling without presumption (modestia), that is, not to disturb the common peace or interest by πολυπραγμοσύνη (officiousness) or ambition." It is true that these precepts contain "virtues and offices necessary to human society" but the emphasis is upon private virtue. Revenge, for example, is for the magistrate to administer impersonally while the ordinary man must develop self control and generosity.[2] So in marriage one is to develop faithfulness and sobriety; in property diligence, in communication truth. All of these virtues, Melanchthon says in considering the ninth and tenth commandments, point to the difference between what is demanded of God and what can be paid by men, and thus threatenings and promises are added to keep us faithful by fear of punishment (poenas) if by nothing else. This is a development, be it noted, from the optimism of the first Loci, where faith is itself the motive for obedience.

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[1] Ibid., 396.

[2] Ibid., 397.

The editions between 1542 - 59 contain a much longer consideration of the Decalogue. In fact, the discussion "de Lege" has changed from the outline of the first "Loci" - de divinis legibus, de consiliis, de monachorum votis, de iudicalibus et caeremonialibus legibus, de humanis legibus - to a specific analysis of the Decalogue as the body of divine laws. "Meditation upon the Decalogue is most useful and most wholesome, for it contains such full and heavenly teaching that it can never be (completely) probed (perspici), never exhausted."[1]

God here has shown the condition of human nature both in its origins and in its actuality. Moreover, He impresses us with His wrath at the situation and therefore urges us to repent, and then points to the redeeming work of Christ.[2] The first table thus emphasises that "obedience and honour should be shown to God", that is to say,[3] the interior and exterior aspects of the right relationship to God, and the origin and purpose of the ceremonial worship in Scripture. With Calvin, Melanchthon finds that the ceremonies had a moral significance which is of eternal significance, but he concludes, "This first principle ("principalis sententia") belongs to all men and all times, because it is the Law of Nature" (quia est Lex Naturae).

Of the second Table he says, "Even if a political way of life were here being set out, it would still remain for human reason to recognise that the best form of polity is (in fact) set forth here."[4] It is not merely an externally efficient state that is sought but the faith which alone makes /

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[1] Ibid., 688.
[2] Ibid., 689-90.
[3] Ibid., 700.
[4] Ibid., 702. "Etiamsi tantum politica vita hic institueretur, tamen agnoscere humanum rationem oporteret, optimam formam politiae hic proponi".

makes an individual or a state "right". In the first place, however, it is laid down that God does command the existence of a State.[1] We are not intended to live solitary, but under the discipline of a three-fold honour[2] - to parents, to "common offices" and to the state. In short, the Decalogue may be taken as "forma gubernationis"; "forma regiminis" comprising "omnes virtutes et omnia officia boni patris et boni gubernatoris",[3] and the consideration which Melanchthon gives to the various precepts is along this line.

The development of the doctrine of the Decalogue in Melanchthon is, however, radically different from its development in Calvin. The difference might be expressed in terms of Natural Law. Calvin's view of Nature is essentially negative: it is admitted only so far as to impress the universality of responsibility; Melanchthon seems, even in the latest editions, to think that, even without the special revelation of the Decalogue,[4] men might be credited with a considerable knowledge of the divine nature and the divine will. It is significant, however, that such knowledge does not appear to have led Melanchthon to the vigorous democratic Church of Calvin. The State and the magistrate owe their origins to sources independent of Christian action: and he can even make a plea that, when the ruler is unrighteous [illegible] the institution and the person must be distinguished. Calvin's method was to control the function of the magistracy by a reference to the Christian conscience - that /

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1 Ibid., 703.
2 "Triplex honos", Ibid., 704.
3 Ibid., 705-6.
4 Section de Lege Naturae, C.R. XXI, 711 ff.

that is, the Church courts - and to do so he had to narrow his generalities. He might agree with the bare skeleton of a law of Nature - the necessity of the State, for example - but the actual condition of the state could be determined not from a theory of nature so much as the practical teaching of revelation through Scripture and through the motion of the Spirit. Instead of a law of Nature then, Calvin has to introduce a doctrine of predestination - which is, of course, an acknowledgment of ignorance without an admission that any moral situation is meaningless. Calvin in short uses the Decalogue in a stricter and more practical manner than Melanchthon, because the situation he was dealing with was narrower and more practical.

Melanchthon was not without a political influence but in religious circles it tended to be, like the Lutheran influence, pietistic, that is, concerned with personal rather than political criticism. But it also affected the non-religious doctrines of Grotius and Hobbes, and was, indeed, a step in their emancipation from the religious trammels of Medieval thought.[1] Is that development to be considered advantageous? The doctrine of nature, as Brunner says,[2] has become increasingly secular throughout the centuries, but, on the other hand, according to Lang,[3] the advance of the Protestant movement politically required the development of the secular "monarchomachist" movement. The answer there seems to rest upon the opinion whether Calvin's close social and religious relationships in Geneva could have been maintained as the "right" Protestant state, or /

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[1] Hill, op. cit.

[2] "Justice and the Social Order."

[3] In a paper "The Reformation and Natural Law", published in a symposium, "Calvin and the Reformation" (1909).

or whether they were as unreal and sentimental as ultimately the Calvinist must regard Luther and Melanchthon.

(iii)

Farel and Zwingli belong to a movement in the Reformation which must have seemed strange to Luther. The Swiss cantons had long been accustomed to the responsibility and turbulence of self government. Reform therefore was only to be achieved in their midst by a democratic appeal to the general public, and it could be achieved by the personality of an individual unsupported by any physical support of the powers that be. Farel and Zwingli were such individuals.

Farel's work may be taken first since it was written earlier, by a small margin, than Zwingli's, but also because it is offensive[1] rather than reconstructive in its emphasis. Farel was constantly on missionary service. The "Summaire", for example, although planned under the exhortation of Oecolampadius,[2] while Farel was in Basel, seems to have been published after he had left the town.[3] The second edition appeared while he was at Neuchâtel.[4] He was, says his editor, "neither a teacher like Calvin nor a writer like Viret, nor a poet like Beza ", but "more than any of them, an orator"[5] who could persuade men like Zwingli and Calvin to achieve greater works.

Luther's treatise grew out of his sermons, Melanchthon's "Loci" was expedited by the appearance of a printed text of his lectures on Romans.

Zwingli /

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1 Kidd, op. cit., 649, quotes Calvin's deathbed speech as evidence that Farel's work was mainly destructive.

2 Realencyclopädie für Prot. Theol., article, "Farel".

3 Heyer, op. cit., 24, quoting Baum's 1867 edition, preface, i-vi. Baum's edition is based upon the 1534 edition, which he claims to be merely a reprint of the 1524 work. There was another edition in 1552.

4 Ibid., 37.

5 Baum, introduction to 1867 edition of Farel's "Summaire".

Zwingli and Calvin also were impelled to write in order to meet a specific challenge to their faith. Farel's motive was the opportunity of the public disputation in Basel on February 27th, 1524, at which he offered "thirteen Reformation headings."[1] No doubt these theses influenced him in his more deliberate address to "all who love our Lord and wish to know the truth"[2] which he presented later in the year. The title of this work is, "A brief summary and declaration of some places very necessary to a Christian to put his trust in God and to help his neighbour." "Places" (lieux) has here the specialised meaning that is found in Melanchthon's "Loci", and like Melanchthon, Farel sought his authority primarily in the written Word of God. In his original theses, which were denunciations of ecclesiastical abuse and ceremonial[3] Farel appealed to the authority of Scripture, and the argument of the "Summaire" refers to the sense of knowledge of spiritual things; that is "the law of God . . . the judgment of Scripture", and not "our understanding, wisdom, reason or prudence."[4] The chapters themselves progress from the subjects of God, man, Jesus Christ, Law, Gospel, sin, justice, the flesh, the Spirit, unbelief, faith, merit, and grace to the climax of resurrection and the Day of Judgment. The emphasis is thus a preacher's, namely the response of faith to the revelation of God in Scripture and in Jesus Christ. The work, however, is more deliberately a system of dogmatic argument than Luther's or even Melanchthon's treatises at least in their early forms. It is much more like the deliberate argument of Calvin's 1535 "Institutio" /

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1 See Heyer, op. cit., pp. 19 ff.

2 Summaire - sub title.

3 Heyer, op. cit., p. 30.

4 Summaire, Introduction.

"Institutio" which, though based upon the lay doctrines of the Decalogue, Creed, and Lord's Prayer, nevertheless touched the fundamental theology of justification by faith.

In emphasising the necessity of a right conduct based upon personal faith in God, and not upon work-holiness, that is to say, in attacking the Mass as mere idolatry diverting responsibility away from God to the priest and his action at the altar, Farel involved himself in the inevitable problem of authority. His answer was simple. "Holy Scripture, both in Old and New Testament, contains what we ought to do, that is, what we ought to feel and believe about God our Father . . . for the sacred writers are inspired by the spirit of God . . . nor is it necessary to add to or to take away from [the Scripture]."[1] "In matters of salvation all that is not clearly and plainly based in Scripture is to be rejected."[2] Ethically, the implication of this view is that we act according to the revealed Law of God, and not according to any vague Law of Nature, but in distinguishing Old and New Testament, he draws the line between the "fear" of the ancient people of God and the "love" which is the motive of Christian obedience. As for the law of Moses, he thinks that "all this mix-up of ceremonies, mortification of the flesh, the multitude of offerings and sacrifices"[3] signifies nothing any more, since we are not of the particular people whom God has placed under these laws. He recognises of course that the Mosaic ordinances offer us teaching, but hidden teaching which Jesus and His apostles /

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1 Summaire, XXXVI.
2 Ibid., XV.
3 Ibid.

apostles give us clearly. Thus in the Old Testament he seeks the light of the New.[1] Virtually, therefore, although Farel would probably not have admitted the suggestion, Christians can do without the Old Testament except as illustration.

The Law, therefore, is the Law as summarised by Christ. Farel does not say as much. He says it is "the true rule of good living containing and showing all justice and all perfection that ought to be in man, teaching him what he ought to do and avoid in order to be the true image of God clear and shining in all charity and right."[2] That is to say, it is, as Calvin describes it,[3] the "mirror" that shows man what true righteousness is, and by implication, what man in his sin is. Sin thus, as in ROMANS, is concupiscence awakened to a knowledge of itself.

Heyer has drawn an interesting comparison between Farel's action and thought before and after his meeting with Calvin in 1536. The appeal of the Reformers to Scripture as the absolute source of saving knowledge and to freedom of interpretation of that Scripture alarmed civil governments and forced a reconsideration of the nature of Christian liberty.[4] Farel's interpretation of Scripture illustrated this deeper analysis of the faith. In three works on the subject - "Le Glaire de la Parolle Véritable" (1550), the 1552 edition of the "Summaire", and "Du Vray Usage de la Croix" (1560) he still reaffirms that "the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all that is needed for men to know and do (what is necessary) to their salvation" and "(the Bible) has been given to us of God,"[5] and is "inspired by the Holy Spirit,"[6] but there is /

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1 Ibid.
2 Summaire, IV.
3 INST., 2: 7: 7.
4 Op. cit., 113 ff.
5 "Du Vray Usage de la Croix", XXIV.
6 "Le Glaire de la Parolle véritable", 27.

is the note of judgment in his assertion of our knowledge of God. No doubt God speaks in Scripture: but can we understand since we are sinners?[1] This is the very question which led Calvin away from the doctrine of assurance into the cautious enforcement of discipline even upon Christians.

There can be little doubt that Calvin's influence is to be traced in this modification of Farel's original theme. It may be a fair enough comment upon him, therefore, to conclude that, while he set about the task of building a Christian dogmatics without any of the subtleties which Melanchthon tended to borrow from the philosophical doctrine of Nature, but simply from the open Bible, yet the logic of the faith led him, as it increasingly led Calvin, to seek in the Decalogue[2] the ethical norm that was not to be identified with, but was rather to replace in Christian thinking, the traditional acceptance of "natural law". A final example of this conclusion is to be found in the Confession of Faith which he drew up with Calvin in 1537,[3] where he specifically identifies the law with the Decalogue. Paragraph 3[4] reads, "Since He is the only Lord and Master, who has the domination of all our consciences, and since also His Will is the only rule of all justice, we confess that all our life ought to be conformed to the commandments of His holy Law, in which is contained all perfection /

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1 Summaire (1552) pp. 30 - 40.

2 See his letter to Haller - Hernin jard, III, 409. The emphasis is upon the spiritual significance of the Decalogue.

3 Kidd, op. cit., 568 ff.

4 Lex Dei Unica. "Quandoquidem solus ille est Dominus, penes quem potestas et imperium in conscientias nostras esse debet: quando eius voluntas unica est universalis institiae regula, vitam nostram ad canonem sanctae legis ipsius exigendam esse confitemur: in qua omnis institiae perfectio comprehensa est. Nec aliam bene recteque vivendi regulam quaerimus: nec admittimus quaerenda esse alia bona opera, illi gratificemur quam quae illic nobis commendavit, ut habetur." EXOD., XX, 2 seq.

perfection and justice and that we ought not to have any other rule of right living and judgment, nor to invent other good works in order to please Him, except those which are contained therein as follows," namely the Decalogue.

(iv)

Apparently Farel himself was one of the many men in Italy and . . . France who urged Zwingli "to write out . . . his religious views for them."[1] Presumably what is meant by this statement is that Farel - himself a Frenchman - hearing of the invitation to Zwingli to write, added his own characteristic invitation to fill out the statement he himself was making at the time, and thus to spread the reasoning of Reform beyond the borders of Switzerland. Zwingli complied, dedicating his work, as Calvin was later to do, to Francis I,[2] the "most Christian King" of France. In 1525 Francis was newly come to the throne and there was expectation that he would carry France into the Protestant interest. But Zwingli's book was placed straightway upon the Index by the Sorbonne theologians, and Francis followed the politically safer path of Romanism. Thus in 1535 Calvin addressed him not as a possible convert but as a sworn opponent. The importance of Zwingli's manner of address, however, is significant of his /

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[1] C.R. XC, 637: "multis trans alpes doctis piisque hominibus.": he goes on to say that he had determined to write down his own views as a commentary, in order to communicate them to, and receive the criticism of, "doctissimis Galliarum."

[2] Ibid., 628. The title of the dedication is "Christianissimo Galliarum regi Francesco", etc: later, he adds, "Christianissimi titulo, qui Galiis imperatis, non immerito gloriamini", 629.
Melanchthon also addressed his "Loci" to the "most Potent and Illustrious Monarch, Francis, the most Christian king of the Franks."

his political interpretation of the faith. Reformation did mean criticism of, and interest in, political matters even if it did not preach destruction of present establishments.

The "Commentary" belongs to a period which has been described as his "period of struggle".[1] Zwingli had already established his position in Zurich by his preaching and disputation, but had not yet consolidated it with an explicit and comprehensive statement of his faith.[2] The statement was finally brought to birth by his conflict simultaneously with the Anabaptists, the Romanists, and Luther himself; it was therefore a systematic statement of his faith "eam religionem, quam de Deo et ad Deum domi habet".[3] Although more controversial and therefore less balanced than Calvin's statement in the "Institutes", this work is important not only for its systematic treatment but also for its challenge to Luther. Through its influence upon the Strasburg theologians it was to modify Calvin's Protestant thought.

Zwingli applies the explicit distinction between "false" and "true" religion to Romanism and Reform.[4] Here then was an end to the attempt to reform the Church from within its medieval institution. The means of true piety was in Reform. Quite half of the treatise is a repetition of an earlier work, the "Reply to Emser", which had been published in 1524 at the climax of a virulent controversy on the subject of the Mass, but Zwingli /

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[1] Realencyclopädie art. Zwingli.

[2] Before his conversion to Reform, Zwingli had already made a name for himself with his preaching as "People's Priest" at Einsiedeln (1516-17) and in Zurich, 1519. His sermons were strictly Scriptural - see C.R. LXXXIX, 145.

[3] C.R. XC, 638.

[4] Ibid., 639. Dum autem additione 'veri' et 'falsi' religionem a superstitione distinguimus, in cum usum fit, ut, cum religionem ex veris verbi dei fontibus propinaterimus, altero veluti poculo superstitionem quoque probeamus, non ut quisquam de ipso bibat, sed ut effundat et confrugat."

Zwingli does also try to set out the positive statement of Reformed doctrine. What, he asks, in the first section, is religion; and his answer is in terms of Cicero's definition,[1] that religion concerns the things that pertain to worship, that is to say, faith, life, laws, worship and sacraments.[2] The means of distinguishing between true and false religion is from the relationship of these practices to the Word of God.[3] The argument thus shifts to a consideration of our knowledge of God in nature and in revelation. Zwingli says that by nature men may know "that" God is but not "what" He is.[4] The difference rests upon the difference between a general and a special revelation of God to men. Like all the Reformers Zwingli does not clearly distinguish between the knowledge one might expect from a non-Christian and the knowledge one has in Christ; the pagan was not a common object of concern in 16th century Christendom as he has to be in modern Western civilisation.[5] Rather Zwingli is concerned with two sorts of Christian faith, the true and the false, distinguishable by their respective authority in Scripture.

Zwingli's classicism raises a point which is constantly occurring in criticism of the Reformers. He did not perceive that the pessimism of Cicero /

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1 Ibid. The reference is to "de natura deorum, Lib. 2".

2 Ibid. fidem, vitam, leges, vitus, sacramenta.

3 Ibid. Facillimum igitur nobis est de vera falsaque Christianorum religione scribere, ac veluti rationem fidei nostrae reddere, quam non ex humanae sapientiae lacunis, sed ex divini spiritus imbre qui verbum dei est, hausimus.

4 Ibid., 640, "quid sit Deus, fortasse supra humanum captum, verum, quod sit, haud supra cum est."

5 Calvin speaks of Christian duty to the pagans in terms of the relationship of the Israelites to the Egyptians, [Opera VI, 576]. But the Turk or the Irish Gael was too much a source of physical terror to be regarded as anything except vermin. Even Cromwell, says John Buchan, was only echoing his age when he said so [see John Buchan's "Oliver Cromwell"].

Cicero was the pessimism of decadence - the pessimism to which Stoicism leads when the flush of hope in human nature is dashed by the fact of human sin and folly - while the energy of Reform derived from a confidence inspired by newly found knowledge. Erasmus was much more consistent when in his "De Libero Arbitrio" of 1524 he indulged optimistic hopes for mankind through mankind. The Reformers taught the sinfulness of human nature for reasons of doctrine rather than for reason of personal despair, and their classical allusion therefore is somewhat artificial. Zwingli's real thesis of sin is based upon the Pauline doctrine that sin was not imputed before the Law came, that, in other words, "sin" is a Christian term for human concupiscence brought to saving despair by knowledge of the revealed Law.[1] The distinction between true and false religion is that the former turns the believer to Christ alone for salvation, while the latter stifles the consciousness of sin by offering the mediation of priestly offices.[2]

The importance of Zwingli in Reform is that he brings the issue finally to the bar of Scripture. The Law shows us God's demands and the Gospel shows us Christ's satisfaction of God's just wrath.[3] There is no need to go outside the Scriptures for our complete knowledge of our God and His ways to men.[4] There is thus no question about "what we ought to do", for that is set down in black and white. Our share is continuous /

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[1] C.R. XC, 708: "Morbus ignorat se ipsum, quod morbus sit, opinaturque licere, quicquid libet." But 'per legem cognitio peccati' ROM., VII.7 .

[2] De Vera et Falsa Rel., Sections 11 and 12 - concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost and the Keys. Also C.R., XC, 720 ff. Zwingli thought that even the Lutherans laid too much stress upon the mere utterance of the Word. "Sed verbo docemur, quidem homine administro, quamvis verbo non reddamur certi, nisi domini spiritus corda nostra liquefaciat, quo verbum inseri ac in deum spes plantari queat." (740).

[3] See the section on the Gospel, ibid., 691 ff.

[4] Ibid., 643. Fucus ergo est et falsa religio, quicquid a theologis ex philosophia 'quid sit deus' allatum est. Quod si quidam de hoc quaedam vere dixerunt, ex ore dei fuit, qui cognitione suae semina quaedam etiam in Gentes sparsit, quamvis parcius et obscurius; alioqui verum non esset." ..... "Nobis autem . . . ex divinis oraculis petenda sunt."

continuous repentance and acknowledgment of dependence upon His grace. The supreme sin is denial of that dependence upon Him alone.

Zwingli knew that somehow this revealed Law must be equated with the universal conscience of mankind. He does not devote much space to the discussion, but he does advance on Melanchthon's vague "natural light". Whatever conscience may be, he says, it is clear that the precepts of the Law are eternally binding upon the "inner man".[1] It is therefore God's responsibility to see that all men have been presented with His Will. Conscience is of God, for "none writes in the heart save God alone".[2] Calvin also reached the conclusion that conscience is the tablet of the Law written by the finger of God upon the heart of man. The emphasis upon revelation, it will be observed, has not been lost in the accommodation of the universal.

Moreover, Zwingli emphasises the ethical relationship of man to God.[3] If the supreme sin of false religion is to stifle the repentance of the believer, the supreme duty of the believer is the principle that "every action, every design . . . and whatever regards one's neighbour must be comprehended under this law".[4] These are the eternal precepts; the civil laws may vary and the ceremonial be abrogated in Christ. Having reached /

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[1] Ibid., 707 "de interiore (homine)"

[2] Ibid. "at in cordâ nemo scribit nisi solus deus." The section upon man is very short. Zwingli dismisses "civil" and "ceremonial" laws as being "ad exteriorem hominem", and as "per Christum in universum sublatae."

[3] In the "von der Klarheit und Gewissheit" he says "the Word of God, as soon as it shines upon the understanding of man, illuminates it in such a way that it understands it, confesses it, and becomes certain of it", C.R. LXXXVIII, 361. He also gives twelve criteria by which the listener to a sermon can be sure of its divine authority (ibid., 367); one at least is a direct relationship, a "personal experience" of God. Zwingli spoke of his own conversion in these terms. [Ibid., 379: also in the Apologeticus Archeteles (1522: ibid., 260].

[4] C.R. XC, 707 "omnem igitur actionem, omne consilium, et quicquid ad proximium spectat, sub hac lege contineri necesse est."

reached this conclusion, however, Zwingli turns from its pursuit to particular controversy, for Rome was guilty of maintaining the ceremonial laws in order to justify her existence by performing them. The Keys, he says, were not given to Peter as a mystical individual but to all the disciples as individual believers in Him,[1] and thus the true apostolic succession is in the succession of believing persons in each succeeding generation.

The advance which this work marks upon those that have been mentioned is that it had correlated the two problems of Christian faith and action, namely, the universal implication of the divine Will and the particular revelation of the divine grace in Christ. The medieval assumption that an institution could save was finally laid, so far as Reformed thought was concerned at least. The first mark of the true Church for them was no longer a right sacrament, but the right confession of one's faith in God's Word.[2] What was that Word? and what was the faith that it produced? These two questions stand out from Zwingli's theology. And the answers he seems to give are, that the Word is simply the written Word,[3] the Bible, while faith is the direct assurance of the Holy Spirit which one must assume accompanies the proper meditation upon the Word. A third and closely allied conclusion is that the conceptions of the Church as a visible /

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1 Ibid., 723 ff, section "de Clavibus".

2 Ibid., 747. "Videmus hic luce clarius Christi ecclesiam sponsam suam . . hic habere fundamentum et robur, quod sit eius, cum confitetur Christum dei vivi esse filium." This confession of faith rests, of course, upon the right preaching of the Word - ibid., 749, "ecclesia, quae errare nequeat, ea nimirum sola, quae solo verbo dei nititur."

3 ". . . Zwingli identified the Word of God with the Scripture . . . and . . obliterated the useful and time honoured distinctions between the value and purpose of the Law and the Gospel, and between the Old Testament and the New Testament." Davies, op. cit., p. 73.

visible body of Christ's faithful ones and as the sacramental institution of His eternal Will have to be distinguished. Clearly all do not possess faith, even amongst those to whom the Word is rightly preached. It is, of course, inconceivable that the Word should not be absolute in its Truth, and as it is equally inconceivable that God's decree should be defeated by human disobedience, it follows that for some reason in God's own Providence, some should be deliberately excluded by Him. Equally, however, it follows that the faithful, acting as citizens, should not tolerate reprobation, even if reprobation should be, theoretically, God's Will for certain individuals.

Zwingli, however, does not actually say so much, and in this respect may be said to stand midway between the Lutheran and the Calvinist polity. Melanchthon, like Luther, seemed content to accept the state and live the Christian life under it as might best be done. Zwingli goes further and asserts not only that it would be desirable to have a Christian magistracy, but that magistrates in a Christian state must be professing Christians.[2] In fact too he was prepared to deal forcibly with recusants;[3] but he does not give any real reason for doing so apart from his own interpretation of Scripture.[4] Thus he not only suppressed Anabaptism /

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[1] That is to say, the Church as the visible body of all who live, have lived, or will live, the life of confessed Christian obedience. C.R. XC, 750 ff, but, of course, this Church is "hominibus ignotam": "nunquam coituram esse usque ad ultimam istum diem" etc. (contra Emserum).

[2] C.R. XC, 867.

[3] e.g., the drowning of Anabaptists on 7th March, 1526.

[4] Ibid., 871.

Anabaptism but went back upon his own assumption that the "Gemeinden" would, by the exercise of their Christian freedom, reach a common pattern of church government. Some actually wished to retain the Mass and had to be restrained by Act of Council (12th April, 1525). Calvin avoided such inconsistency by the thoroughness of his discipline upon the Church[1] as well as upon the outsider.

Zwingli's weakness lies in the attempt to maintain Christian freedom as an individual attribute.[2] But the "faith" that was preached by Lutherans and by Zwingli himself could hardly avoid the inference that the Church was to be simply a body of professing persons; and all that the Anabaptists were doing was to assume that this Church should govern itself by its own understanding of God's Word. Zwingli's dilemma was that no pattern revealed itself absolutely and mechanically. Therefore his theocratic state was a dictatorship of the established church against dissentients. So, of course, was Calvin's; but Calvin did not present his Church as a body of perfect persons. Perhaps he lost something of the primeval brightness that can be assumed from the doctrine of the inner light, by which men turn gladly from a darkness they cannot help, from a disease that has descended upon them, to the relief of divine salvation /

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1 e.g. the "Consilia" C.R. XXXVIII(a). In certain cases of disagreement the magistracy would exert authority. For example in theological disagreement (ibid., 18, and even in the composition of domestic disagreement (ibid., 111 ). In the INST., 4: 12: 1, he says that discipline is the nerve of religion.

2 In church decisions he assumes direct illumination by the Word of God which is 'seated in the minds of the faithful', C.R.LXXXVIII, 752. Ibid., 867 ff. Of magistrates; he says their office is ordained of God. This view might imply that even in the wider, less personal, issues of the state there should be a pattern of divine reference. It is obvious that Zwingli inferred that there is such a reference; but the basis of his inference is simply that he had proved a reference of faith in individual faith.

salvation in Christ. Calvin, of all the Reformers, was most consistent in his doctrine of sin as something for which men were responsible. Of course, all the others said so, but Calvin acted upon his doctrine. The result was a less bright picture of salvation. The most that can be said is that we are upon a race that leads to heaven. Even the Christian, then, requires discipline, and thus the Christian is not so ready to pass judgments based upon his own Christian intuition. Personality is at a discount with Calvin. The Word of God is the norm; the Holy Spirit is the power, but the channel is not the individual but the congregation acting as a court.

The Christian conscience, then, for Calvin, is neither that of the obscure Anabaptist fanatic nor that of the acclaimed Christian magistrate's voice, but the combined voice of the citizens speaking as churchmen. This is the "middle principle" of natural law to which Bohatec refers[1] when he speaks of Calvin as balancing the actual laws of a Christian state against the divine Will. The question that remains to be asked is whether this middle principle is adequately represented - or could be adequately represented - by Zwingli's dismissing of God's Law in the New Testament summary. Is it not precisely in the easy assumption of direct intellectual illumination that "enthusiasm" begins? Calvin not only spoke of the Law as an eternal principle, but worked out the implications of that principle - the principle of equity - in terms of a Moral Law which historically had embodied the precepts given to God's people. In order to /

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1. Bohatec, "Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche (1937), pp. 17 ff.

to make a place for this serious treatment of the Decalogue Calvin was content to lose the idea of the Church as a body of more or less recognised believers. The continuity of the Church for him does not rest upon an inner light in human nature so much as upon a fiat of the divine Will. All that can really be said about human nature is that it is sinful. All else depends entirely upon God's grace. Not inner light, but divine predestination, is the basis of the Church's existence and therefore the real force of the Church's judgments.

(v)

Calvin belonged to the second generation of Reformers. In 1525, when the works which have been considered were new publications, he was a youthful student in Paris and a Roman Catholic. The nature of his conversion is somewhat obscure,[1] so that one may assume that it was not of a dramatic nature. It took place between 1529 and 1533, however, for by 1535 Calvin was a religious exile in Basel.

In putting pen to paper in the "Christianae Religionis Institutio" Calvin claimed to be doing no more than provide an elementary treatise[2] for the use of his countrymen in exile. The origin of the work is vague. If he were working up notes originally made in his retreat at Angoulême in 1534 - the "Breves Admonitiones Christianas" referred to by Beza - /

[1] He speaks of a sudden conversion "subita conversione" (Kidd, op.cit. 523, quoting Preface to Psalms), but it does not seem to have been dramatic. Williston Walker, op. cit., discusses the matter at some length.

[2] "Rudimenta quaedam": C.R. XXIX, 9(3). In the Preface to Psalms he describes it as an Encheiridion.

Beza[1] - they may be said to derive from his first efforts at preaching, that is to say, elucidating, the faith that was in him. Troeltsch thinks that Calvin can be described as at this time a "Lutheran"[2] and such was the general term given to Reformers. There were no doubt other French "Lutherans" in Basel, exiles from the Sorbonne heresy hunt. The "Institutio" was an essay in the views to which they were in fact committed, particularly relevant since they were in danger of being confused with the Anabaptist movement both there and in France.[3] The first edition of Calvin's polity was thus scarcely a public manifesto. It was published anonymously and was not yet the plea of the exiles to the sovereign of their native land.[4] Like the other works that have been considered, the main object in view was particular and local and the general principles outlined were drawn against a specific background of controversy such as the opposition of Rome or the turbulence of the Anabaptists.

The literary history of the "Institutes" brings its later editions into a group of works which Calvin either wrote or revised towards the end of his life. Amongst these works have already been mentioned his sermons on the Decalogue and his Harmony of the Pentateuch, and it has been suggested /

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[1] C.R. XLIX, 123. Beza's "Life".

[2] "Social Teaching", II, 579.

[3] Preface to Psalms. "Ecce autem quum incognitus Basillae laterem, quia multis piis hominibus in Gallia exustis, grave passim apud Germano odium ignes illi excitaverant, sparsi sunt, eius, restinguendi causa, improbi ac mendaces libelli, non alios tam crudeliter tractavi quam Anabaptistas ac turbulentos homines, qui perversis deliriis non Religionem modo sed totum ordinem Politicum convellerent." In his letter to Francis, Calvin makes the same distinction between the good citizenship of the group he represented and the anarchic tendencies of the Anabaptists.

[4] That is, if Beveridge's view of the later addition of the "Epistola Nuncupatoria" be accepted.

suggested that Calvin's political experience in Geneva brought the focus of his Christian experience even more narrowly upon the central problem of Christian obedience in the sense of Christian citizenship in the world as distinct from the isolated personal piety which condemns the world as evil. The purpose of this section upon the 1536 "Institutio"[1] is to emphasise that even before political responsibility was thrust upon his youthful shoulders, he grasped the social implications of Reformed - that is to say, of "true" - Christian faith in a most remarkable manner. As Beveridge points out in his excellent summary, the main opinions scarcely changed throughout the additions and recasting of form which the work underwent in the twenty years of its handling. Sometimes even the wording of the first edition is little changed in the process.[2]

The actual form of the treatise is not remarkable. Its six chapters,[3] dealing with the Law, Faith, Prayer, the Sacraments to be retained (baptism and the Lord's Supper), the sacraments to be rejected (the remaining five of the medieval church) and of Christian liberty, are, like the emphasis of the other Reformers whose works have been considered, primarily, an explication of the faith that the Prone existed in medieval practice to develop /

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1 For purposes of distinction the 1536 edition is referred to as the "Institutio", the 1559 edition as the "Institutes" - shortened in reference to INST.

2 Examples are given in a table in Beveridge's edition of the "Institutes".

3 The first three deal with the common material of the Prone, viz.,
(1) the Decalogue - the chapter heading is "De Lege"
(2) the Creed - " " " "De Fidei"
(3) the Lord's Prayer - " " " "De Oratione".
(4) De Sacramentis .
(5) De Falsis Sacramentis.
(6) De Libertate Christiana, potestate ecclesiastica, et politica administratione.

develop in the laity. This was the right faith in their view because it was faith in touch with the reality of daily circumstance as distinct from the parade of external trappings of clerical celibacy, priestly pretension and monastic social irresponsibility. And since the expression of the elementary faith of the laity was in terms of the Decalogue, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, it is not surprising that these subjects should form the matter of the first three chapters. Nor is it surprising that upon the basis of this faith an attack should be made upon the ecclesiastical pretensions in the very stronghold of their position, namely the sacraments. And finally there is the positive statement that must follow the demolition of a system: how did the exponents propose to conduct themselves in the practical relationships of personal and municipal responsibility?

The problem of authority is not confined to Reformed doctrine. It is a problem of all Christian thinking precisely because it concerns the point of contact between the disparate planes of the divine Will and human conduct. From New Testament times Christian believers had to grapple with the claims of the divine command and the counter claims of natural duty to family, class and state.[1] But in 16th century Europe the social background was complicated by the integration of - at least pretended - "Christian" authority. The Reformed problem was thus not only to deal with paganism but also to refute this false doctrine - to prove, in short, that the established spiritual order was a long standing heresy. In doing so, as has been suggested in preceding sections, Luther took refuge against the Church in the secular order which Christian influence had produced - namely the Christian prince; Melanchthon sought a more doctrinal basis of /

[1] Hence perhaps the divine Word, "He that loveth . . . more than me is not worthy" [MATT., X, 37] and the Pauline phrase about crucifixion to the world [GAL., VI, 4, etc.].

of Reformation and found it in the natural light of human nature. Neither of these views is so erroneous as ~~this~~ its bald summary suggests. Both emphasise the necessity of finding the true faith in contact with ordinary human situations, and while Luther expresses the practical necessity of an ordered Christian society, Melanchthon expresses the essential doctrine of rational consent which must underlie such a society. In practice Zwingli advanced on these views by the experiment which he was able to work out in Zurich. Here were the "Gemeinden" of the faithful endeavouring to work out the pattern of their salvation according to the pattern of God's revelation; but as was noted, the patterns of the various groups failed to agree without the enforcing power of the secular arm.

Without desiring to over-emphasise the object of one's own research, one cannot escape the suggestion that Zwingli's democratic experiment failed in the degree to which he left the inspiration of the divine command to a simplified summary of the Decalogue. Whether Calvin perceived in the 1536 edition the relationship of the Decalogue to Christian conduct in the same degree that he did in the Harmony of 1563 would be of only academic interest if it can be shown that in 1536 he already had taken this step beyond his predecessors of establishing Christian conduct upon the eternal principle of revelation as exemplified in the Old Testament.[1] This seems to be precisely what Calvin did intend when he began his treatise with a consideration of Law which he identified with the Decalogue.[2]

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[1] That is to say, a Scriptural as distinct from Melanchthon's natural principle of human nature and an absolute as distinct from Zwingli's casual interpretation of the revealed Word.

[2] The full title of the first chapter is, "De Lege, quod Decalogi explicationem continet."

Into this discussion is poured much of the material which in later editions was expanded into chapters and finally, in the 1559 edition, into more than a whole book. The Synopsis set out in the Corpus Reformatorum illustrates this point. In the original folio the paging of the introductory material, leading up to the discussion of the individual commandments, is from 42 to 52[1] These ten pages correspond to Book I and the first seven and a half chapters of Book II in the 1559 edition. The whole of Book I, indeed, might be taken as an expansion of pages 42 and 43 in the 1536 folio. The two sentences - "the whole of sacred doctrine may be said (fere) to consist of these two parts:- knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves"[2] and ". . . the forebear of us all, Adam, was created after the image and likeness of God, that is, endowed with wisdom, justice, holiness, and that so long as he thus clung to God by the gifts of His grace, he should have been continually victorious in Him, if he had continued in that integrity of nature which he had received from God."[3] - are the principles out of which the long discussion on our knowledge of God is developed in 1559. The sentence on page 45, "Although we are thus born in such a way that it is not in us to do anything that could be accepted by God, nor that there is found in our virtue anything that could be /

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1 In the 1536 edition as it stands pp. 1 - 42 cover the "Epistola Nuncupatoria" or introduction.

2 "Summa fere sacrae doctrinae duabus his partibus constat: Cognitione Dei ac nostri." C.R.XXIX 27(42). The figure in brackets refers to the paging of the original folio.

3 The whole sentence is, "Quo in certam nostri notitiam veniamus, hoc prius habendum est: parentem omnium nostrum Adam esse creatum ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei [GEN., 1], hoc est, sapientia, institia, sanctitate praeditum, atque his gratiae donis Deo ita haerentem, ut perpetuo in eo victurus fuerit, si in hac integritate naturae, quam a Deo acceperat, stetisset." C.R.XXIX,27-8 (43).

be desired by Him, nevertheless we do not cease to owe Him that very thing which we cannot fulfil, etc."[1] provides the theme of Book II as the third point in the Christian analysis of human nature.

It is because Calvin perceived the relevance to Christian faith of the irrational absoluteness of the relationship of these three incompatible doctrines that he turned so resolutely to the Decalogue as the key to Christian conduct. It is true that he does refer to the situation as "natural"[2] and to the Law as "natural"[3] but it is clear that he could not mean by natural the same thing as a rationalist would mean. The nature referred to is clearly the nature of God's creation, the nature of God's purpose in Adam, the nature of God's permission of sin in Adam, the nature of God's continued demand of the impossible in Adam's children in order that the Divine order of Nature might be re-created by the free acceptance by man of the restoring work on Calvary. To expound this doctrine of duty Calvin had to introduce a doctrine of Providence which to many has appeared monstrous, but behind it there lies a consistent reference to faith in revelation which is just what Luther, Melanchthon and Zwingli in the last resort failed to maintain. The /

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1 "Quamquam etiam sic nati sumus, ut non sit in nobis situm quidquam agere quod Deo acceptum esse possit, nec sit in nostra virtute positum illi gratificari, non tamen desinimus id ipsum debere quod praestare non possumus, quando enim Dei creaturae sumus, eius honori et gloriae servire debebamus, ac eius mandatis morem genere." **C.R.XXIX,** 28. Cf. INST., 2: 8: 2.

2 E.g., above "integritate naturae". Even if this phrase be restricted to "human" nature, it still refers which exists to the extent at least that man - you or I - is condemned here and now because of what we here and now are.

3 E.g., **C.R. XXIX,** 30 (47). "Proprieque haec ipsa scripta lex, testimonium est duntaxat legis naturalis, quod memoriam nostram saepius excitet, et inculcet ea quae, docente intus lege naturali, non satis didiceramus."

The Christian prince, natural light, even the Zwinglian appeal to Scripture, are all, in the context in which they were made, strictly appeals to forces outside the material of revelation. To say so is not to deny that princes could be Christian nor that all men owe obedience to God, nor that Scripture is the norm of Christian conduct; but it is to assert that the arguments by which Luther, Melanchthon and Zwingli reached these judgments were at best emergency measures and perhaps were no more than rationalisation of their own personal authority; that in other words, to make their theories natural they made essentially material appeals to principles which are inconsistent with their spiritual premises.

The "uses" of the law which Calvin maintained seem to support this judgment. For Luther[1] there were only two uses, the "civil" and the "spiritual", the former of which was "to maintain civil order and obedience" in a non Christian social order so that it would not degenerate into sub-human standards. This was the medieval view of society as at once the sign and the cure of human sin. The latter - "spiritual" - order applied to predestined believers, leading them to a faith which strictly speaking implied the freedom of grace and thus out of the obedience of law. Calvin added a third use,[2] namely the guidance of the Church. That is to say, Calvin /

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[1] The reference here is to a thesis by Dr Keith L. Bridston, (1948) "Law and Gospel and their relationship in the theology of Luther."

[2] The three uses to which Calvin refers are - "Primum, ut dum justitiam Dei ostendit, hoc eat, quam a nobis Deus exigit, suae unumquemque injustitiae admoneat, ac peccati convincat." C.R.XXIX,49 (88). "Deinde, quatenus Deum fore ultorem declarat, poenam transgressonibus constituit, mortem ac judicium minatus; huc prodest, ut qui nulla justi rectique cura, nisi codeti, tanguntur, coerceantur saltem poenarum formidine." Ibid., 50 (89). "Postremo et fidelibus, quorum in cordibus jam viget ac regnat Dei Spiritus, non mediorcrem usum adfert, dum lo magis ae magis asaidue admonet, quid rectum sit, et placitum coram Domino." Ibid., (90) that is to say, the law:
(1) Asserts the sovereignty of God.
(2) By /

Calvin asserted that the freedom of Christian believers was not a freedom from the law, but a free acceptance of the law seen as the divinely ordained structure of the world order. The distinction is not by any means as subtle as it appears. If one accepts the law as simply the expression of God's requirements and therefore God's condemnation of the world, one will, from the point of view of salvation, regard this continuing evil of the world as a remote cloud upon one's personal horizon. There will appear to be, in short, two world orders, that of law, or sin, and that of love or salvation. But are these t separate orders? Is the evil of the world merely a Cross to be borne penitentially by the faithful?[1] Are not Christians rather sent out into the world of sinful men to exhibit God's true purpose for the world, namely, obedience to His justice?

Calvin's treatment of the various commandments in 1536 are no doubt somewhat hasty. Like Luther too he tends to draw out of them his pet doctrine - in Calvin it was the iniquity of images. Perhaps, too, he scarcely contemplated a situation in which he would be the virtual founder and ruler of a new social pattern. But even in these strictly personal conditions his treatment of large issues is statesmanlike. However strongly he might defend the views of the exiles against the imputation of lawlessness, he /

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(2) By implication condemns human claims to absolute worth.
(3) Asserts that even grace is mediated according to the eternal principles of the Divine Will. Hence Calvin would be restricted to a penal and substitutionary view of the Atonement and would restrict the actions of force to ordered channels of Christian discipline. He proceeds to say so in a subsequent paragraph. Ibid. (90-1) The term he uses is "charity" but obviously the charity of members of a separated order of grace to a world eternally lost will be different from the stern charity of saved members of an erring world to their as yet unenlightened fellow citizens.

[1] Bohatec, op. cit. suggests that this was the Lutheran view.

he does not imply that they would accept permission to return home unconditionally. There is even the implication that the King is not above criticism.[1] Kings are in the hand of God, called no doubt to high authority, but never placed beyond the same laws of conduct under which all believers lay. The doctrines of kingship formulated in that same generation by Bodin[2] were to lead France, and to some extent England and Scotland, far away from this democratic view and were to force Calvinists into a republicanism they did not relish.[3] But it seems reasonable to trace the modern doctrine of government by consent, which became in England and Scotland so closely part of the religious tradition and in France returned in a romantic and much less stable form in 1789[4] to the insight of Calvin into Christian freedom and Christian duty.

The implication of this view of the Decalogue is that Calvin regarded it not only as a desirable exercise of piety and not even, as Brunner suggests, an ideal model of conduct.[5] It is true that he regarded as dangerous the proposal to replace existing social codes by the Mosaic code,[6] but the object of his abhorrence was not the proposal to use the Mosaic code so much /

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1 Referring to the pains of exile, he says they must call upon God "cuius in manu sunt regum corda, et regnorum inclinationes." Op.cit., 246-7 (510) That is to say, Calvin hopes that the king will rescind the conditions which make exile the only alternative to martyrdom, but he does not suggest that the king's mercy would be from his own good will. In fact, from one point of view one might even take from this remark the interpretation that the king was positively in error in his presentation of the truth.

2 Bodin's "De Republica" was published in 1577. His "monarch" owed no "legal" duties to his subjects, but only "moral" duties under the law of nature - So Pollock, op. cit., p. 50.

3 In Scotland, for example, during the Bishops' wars. Later, Scotland accepted Charles II in defiance of Cromwell.

4 Via the American States.

5 "Justice and the Social Order", 242.

6 Bohatec, op. cit., p. 15.

much as the implication that the Mosaic Code was merely a code, like that of Solon or Lycurgus. On the contrary the Decalogue is both a social pattern and at the same time an indication of the continuing efficacy of the Holy Spirit. To the unbelieving therefore the Decalogue was only a form of words capable of no development into saving precepts. Before the Decalogue could be used effectively it was necessary to invoke the Holy Spirit.[1] In practice therefore the State as such could not appeal to the Decalogue. Appeal could only be made to the faith of the Church by which the precept of the Divine Will could be expounded.

In this doctrine lie many subjects for discussion, for example, the identity of the State quâ citizens with the Church quâ believing members. More specifically there is an identity of the appeal to "equity" not with natural law, at least as natural law is understood by rationalist thought - that is, as the wisdom of man as he is - but with the living faith of man as a believer - that is, the wisdom of the man who sees the eternal purpose of God. And if this equity is in the last issue mere Christian dictatorship Calvin would appeal to the fact that Christian faith is truth and that the unbeliever if he is indeed reprobate, must be made to conform to that truth.

It may not be altogether irrelevant to add a few remarks about the opportunities that were opening out for Calvin almost on the morrow of his publication of the "Institutio". He had set about the preparation of a second edition almost immediately but was interrupted by, amongst other business, a visit to Ferrara, to the Duchess, who was a noted patron of Reform. Making a detour on his return, in order to avoid "the wars", he passed through Geneva, and, being discovered to Farel, was forcibly detained. /

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[1] Jean Cadier echoes this view of Calvin in his paper "La notion de l'Ecriture Sainte chez Calvin". The Presbyterian World, Sept., 1949. "La compréhension de l'Ecriture, tout comme la foi, est l'oeuvre de l'Esprit." The paper is full of similar references and remarks. For example, "un réformé est un homme qui accepte d'être lié à la Parole de Dieu et de ne pas rechercher de preuve plus haute à ses affirmations que le donné de l'Ecriture sainte."

detained.[1] Between this date and the exile to Strasburg in March 1538 Calvin concerned himself with the practical matter of reconstituting the Church in Geneva rather than with the academic work of his "Institutio". The second edition, published in Strasburg in 1539, where Calvin was engaged in theological teaching, was, however, still academic in its purpose. Six new chapters were added, two, as an expansion of the introductory material, dealing with the knowledge of God, human nature and free will, and four interposed into the discussion on faith, dealing with penance, justification, the relationship between Old and New Testaments, and Providence. At the same time, the chapter on the true sacraments was expanded into chapters on the two main Administrations, baptism and communion. Separate chapters were also made of the various headings of the final chapter of 1536, on Christian liberty. But behind this expansion of thought one cannot help tracing the administrative problems that had brought into being the first of his "Ordonnances".

The "Articles concernant l'organisation de l'église et du culte à Genève, proposés au Conseil par les Ministres" of 16th January, 1537, deal, as would be only right, primarily with the Church order.

His first words are,[2] "it is certain that a church cannot be said to be ordered and governed aright unless in it the Holy Communion of our Saviour is often celebrated and attended. In the act of communion,[3] "the members of /

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[1] See "Annales", C.R. XLIX, 203. The date is August 1536.

[2] C.R. XXXVIII, a. 5 - 6. Il est certain que une esglise ne peut estre dicte bien ordonnee et reiglee synon en la quelle la saincte Cene de nostre Seigneur est souvente foys celebree et frequentee.

[3] Ibid., 8. ". . . pour conjoindre les membres de nostre Seigneur Jesus-Christ avecq leur chefz et entre eux mesmes en ung corps et ung esprit . ." The passage goes on "Mays le principal order que est regnis et du quel je convient avoyr la plus grande sollicitude cest que ceste saincte Cene ordonnee et institutee pour conjoindre les membres de nostre Seigneur Jesus-Christ avecq leur chefz et entre eux mesmes en ung corps ne soyt souillee et contaninée, si ceux nappartenir millement a Jesus, viennent a y Communiquer." The word "chefz" is taken as "heads of families" as more appropriate than "heads of the church".

of our Lord Jesus Christ with their heads and among themselves are joined together in one body and spirit". Constantly faced with the necessity of grace and its means through the right sacraments, they would learn by implication the horrors of excommunication, which was the only ultimate sanction that Calvin would admit. Calvin urged in this document the desirability of a weekly communion,[1] but in the revised editions had to be content with a quarterly. The real sanction was to be an informed public opinion, and Calvin therefore urges the definition of a doctrine of faith so that the faithful might be united in one church. Preaching held a large place in this instruction and also the singing of congregational psalms, led in the first instance by "aulcungs enfans".[2] Educational facilities were to be extended to these children, and finally, precept was to be enforced in practice: the conditions of marriage, for example,[3] were to be defined strictly.

In later projects Calvin emphasised one or other of these four fundamentals. In 1541 when he was reinstated in Geneva he tackled the ecclesiastical problem further,[4] dealing with the organisation and discipline of a right ministry. Its order was to be four-fold - ministers, teachers, elders and deacons - of which the spearhead was the pastoral ministry. Particular arrangements were laid down both for their continual mutual contact and for the extension of their work into outlying parts of the countryside. Their work was religious instruction and not politics, but in /

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1 Ibid., 7. He had also done so in the 1536 "Institutio".
2 Ibid., 12.
3 Ibid., 13.
4 Ibid., 16 ff.

in the last resort the magistrate could be summoned "pour mettre ordre" in the event of "obstination" even in ecclesiastical matters. In short, the ministry was to represent the doctrinal side of the truth of which the state represented the social and political sides. In order to fulfil this function the ministry had to be strictly disciplined. The crimes "intollerable en un ministre" range from a first degree such as heresy and schism to a second degree which includes personal misdemeanour such as uncontrollable anger. In the first order, along with crimes of violence, civil offence, drunkenness and dancing are included, and also usury. This inclusion is interesting in view of the sanction which Calvin gave to usury on a limited scale in business. His motive was no doubt the prevention of misuse of pastoral authority for personal ends. The minister was not to handle money even in poor relief; that was the function of the deacon.

In this first project Calvin deals also with the administration of church "social" services such as baptism, marriage and burial. In all these acts the minister must combat the superstition that the act of the Church can supersede the personal faith of the believer in the Word of God. Burial is very little more than a committal of the body. In the marriage[1] and baptismal question[2] the Reformer seems to have been faced with nothing less than licence, and he has separate consideration upon each. The principle of marriage was to be the banns, which were to ensure that the persons concerned were not only right and proper parties /

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1 Projet d'Ordonnance sur les mariages, 10th November, 1545. C.R. XXXVIII 33 ff

2 Projet d'Ordonnance sur les noms de baptême, 22nd November, 1546. Ibid., 49 ff

parties but were also capable of undertaking the responsibilities of the married state. No person previously unmarried could be married without paternal consent unless the man were over twenty four and the woman over twenty. If such a marriage did take place, it could be rescinded and the parties punished by imprisonment on bread and water - the main parties for three days, the witnesses for one. The ceremony was to be conducted in church "without drums or minstrelsy"[1] and not on a day of communion. Once married, the parties could not easily be released from their vows. The authority of the Council itself might be invoked to persuade them to remain together. Unlike Bucer, Calvin did not allow divorce on grounds of incompatibility. Nullity could be decreed on grounds of physical maladjustment and divorce on grounds of adultery or desertion by either party. The important point is that Calvin expressly made men and women equal in their rights and duties of marriage.

In 1546 Calvin dealt with baptismal names. The fact that he did so at all is significant of the common usage. Again the main concern was the suppression of superstition. Names of local "idols" take precedence in the ban, a fact that suggests that the medieval principle of baptising local deities had not altogether removed paganism from Christendom. Other names banned were such as superstitious persons might take from the Christian religion itself. The Names of God such as Jesus, Saviour, Emanuel, the names of Christian festivals such as Easter, Noel, and even the name Christian, are all banned, together with other less likely names such /

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1 Ibid., 40. "Sans tambourins ne menestriey".

such as Suaire (shroud), Claude (fool) and Mama. Calvin even suggests that other, non-religious names such as Allemande and Mermet, corruptions of names such as Tevenot instead of Estienne, and double names, should also be disallowed, presumably because of their levity.

In several ordonnances during the year 1551 Calvin deals with oaths and blasphemy, and by this time we see how far he had departed from the merely spiritual attitude of the Church to sin. Prison on a bread and water diet is recommended for the various degrees of dishonour to God. Frivolous oaths could be punished in the fourth offence by as much as three months' banishment.[1] Finally the work was revised and completed in the Ordonnances of 1561.

The reason for tracing these events is to indicate the integration of political practice with spiritual precept that was forced upon the author of the "Institutio". The "Genevan"editions of 1543 - 1554 reflect something of that development. There is a good deal more said about both Church and state. For example, a chapter is inserted between the consideration of the Law and Faith, concerning oaths, particularly oaths of religious devotion such as men or women might take to the monastic life. A good deal is also added in explication of faith, Christian liberty and human tradition and finally, on the political significance of Christian faith.

What relationship has this political thought to the Decalogue? That, of course, is precisely the question to be asked and answered in this thesis. It is common enough to appeal to the divine Law as a standard /

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[1] Ibid., 62.

standard of piety or a standard of criticism. It is not so easy to be clear in enunciating a pattern of Christian conduct on the basis of that Law, without, at least, losing the essential freedom of Christian faith. Lobstein[1] describes the Decalogue in Calvin's ethical system as "the norm of the new life" objectively based upon election, that is, the divine will in eternity, and "subjectively" accepted by faith, but "conditioned and presupposed" by Christian freedom. That is to say, the Calvinist view assumes the truth of the beginning and developing of this new life in God's Will, the human response being in terms of penitence, the continual test being self denial, and the manifestation to the world being in the right conduct of family, state and Church. In 1536 Calvin was already saying that Christian liberty consists in fulfilling the demands of the Law without being forced thereto by the Law,[2] so that he could finally, in the "Institutes" of 1559 and the Harmony of 1563, without contradiction seek a pattern of right conduct in the Decalogue without being bound to the Spirit of legalism. As for the necessity of imposing that discipline upon the unwilling Calvin is faced with a difficulty common to all statesmen, and dealt with it perhaps in no worse a manner.

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1 Op. cit.

2 . . . ut conscientiae non quasi legis necessitate coactae, legi obsequantur, sed legis ipsius iugo liberae, voluntati Dei ultro obedient." C.R.XXIX, 197 (403).

## CHAPTER IV

### The Theological Basis of Christian Conduct.

(i) The theological problems of Calvin's conception of "faith".

(ii) Calvin's Biblicism.

(iii) The problem of abrogation.

(iv) The implications of the guilt of men.

(v) Judicial law.

(vi) Natural law.

(i) The Theological Problems of Calvin's conceptions of "faith".

This chapter and the next two are based upon the three major works of Calvin that have already been described as being consciously written or reviewed by him towards the end of his life, and left, as it were, as the deposit of his Christian philosophy. The "Sermons" will not be referred to in any detail since they represent a popular exposition of those views which he has elsewhere expressed in more considered language.[1] But the "Harmony" of the Pentateuch and especially the 1559 "Institutes" may be regarded as the theological mine out of which any definitive exposition of his views on the Decalogue must be hewn.

If the preceding three chapters have fulfilled the purpose intended for them, some idea of the main issues involved in general for any Christian theologian and in particular for Calvin in the circumstances in which he had to find a solution, will have been already formed. They may be briefly summarised as follows. Primarily, the Christian believes he has to consider the importance and the nature of the revelation upon which his confessed faith rests. This is a very large, and indeed may be said to be the whole, issue of Christian theology. Whatever might be said in favour of the 18th century search for a religion that should be independent of revelation,[2] from the Calvinist point /

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[1] His sermons were delivered extempore. They were not reduced to writing till 1545, when Jean Cousin was appointed as the first of his secretaries - T. H. L. Parker. Op. cit., pp. 36 ff.

[2] e.g. Kant's "Religion within the limits of mere Reason" 1791. But this work was only the climax of a long history of argument, particularly in England and Scotland. Graham, op. cit., 351 ff, gives an account of the change of emphasis that happened in Scotland under the influence of Professor Hutchison of Glasgow, [1726 onwards]. Calvin, says Dr Hunter (op. cit., p. 107) "allows himself no licence in a priori reasoning."

point of view it would simply not be the Christian religion. The question rather was the balance of three strains of divine revelation, in the fact of creation, the Written Word representing the historical events leading up to and culminating in the life and death of Jesus Christ, and finally the evidence of the Holy Spirit's leading in the Christian experience of each generation. In determining the balance, the Reformers were not simply selecting amongst theoretical possibilities. They did not, apparently, know much about St. Thomas Aquinas,[1] but the teaching of St. Thomas was in accord with the deep stream of Roman practice with which they had to deal, namely, accommodation with, in order to keep control of, secular affairs, whether philosophical or political. The medieval synthesis did not, of course, ignore the revealed nature of Christian faith; but it was a static exposition in the sense that the Church as an institution (as distinct from the activity of personal response) claimed to be the only channel of inspiration or grace. The objection of the Reformers to this view was that the mere guarantee of the Church was to them an insufficient, indeed a presumptious, solution to the basic problem of Creation, which is sin.[2] Only Jesus Christ can forgive sins, and He must do so to the consciousness /

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1 According to Barth, see "Natural Theology" pp. 100 ff. Calvin's criticism of the Roman usages in INST. 4: 20: 1-19 illustrates the point of Barth's remark. Many of the abuses which he mentions were rectified, largely as a result of Loyola's influence; but, as Barth says, the claims of Rome to absolute spiritual rule remain incompatible with Protestant ideas of Christian freedom. His references to the Papacy in Sermons 15 and 16 of the 1562 collection on DEUT. V (C.R. LIV,407 ff.) are much more fundamental.

2 INST. 4, cap. 20.

consciousness of each believer.

In asserting this interpretation of faith, the Reformers were accused of the anarchy of Anabaptist "inspiration" which was opposed to, or at least apparently incapable of maintaining, stable social grouping.[1] It was necessary, therefore, for the Reformers to prove themselves defenders of Christian society, based upon personal conviction about a historic revelation and membership of the fellowship - the Church - which embodied that eternal revelation. Their bulwark of revelation was thus Scripture, rather than either "nature" or "inspiration",[2] but they interpreted the particular event of Jesus Christ in terms of the eternity and time which led up to and lead away from that point. The Church was no mere chance collection of believers. Calvin can speak of the "fathers" of the Old Testament, and, as Niesel emphasises,[3] the fundamental doctrine of Calvin's ethics is that God's Law is a Covenant[4] and a social law.[5]

Perhaps /

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1 Calvin's prefatory letter to Francis. Doumergue in the article "Calvin - epigone or creator" quoted above. (Calvin and the Reformation, pp. 19 ff) discusses the relationship of the two movements as they presented themselves to theologians of the 19th century. A. C. Underwood "A History of the English Baptists"(1947) points out that Penry and other Separatists who fell under the ban in 16th century England, always protested that they were not Anabaptists. The reason was not doctrinal so much as social. Believers' baptism stood for the political anarchy of Münster - pp. 21 ff, 37 etc.

2 Warfield, article "Calvin's doctrine of the Knowledge of God" in the above symposium, p. 135.

3 Op. cit., 86 ff.

4 Bundesgesetz.

5 As distinct from an isolated personal obedience. On the question of freedom, he says, ibid., 95 "the basis of the precepts, which were given to the nation of Israel for their political life, is imperishable ("unvergänglich") cf. Tawney, op. cit., 103. "(Calvinism) was a creed which sought, not merely to purify the individual, but to reconstruct Church and State." See also Vischer, op. cit., pp. 204 ff.

Perhaps this view involves, as Seeberg remarks,[1] the restriction of individual freedom both in action and in opinion, and it is obvious that Calvin had to rely increasingly upon the doctrine of predestination[2] to preserve the balance between the fact of revelation and the event of faith, but it does account for both consent and order in the impact of God's revealed Will upon the streams of human decisions.

Various subsidiary problems, or aspects of the main problem, immediately present themselves. There is, for example, the suggestion of a "mechanical" inspiration of Scripture. Dr W. P. Patterson asserts[3] that 17th century scholastic Calvinism was based upon such a view, but Calvin clearly did not feel constrained to hold it. Brunner's examples in "Justice and the Social Order"[4] can be multiplied. Taking the discussion of the seventh commandment in the "Harmony of the Pentateuch",[5] for example, - and this is a random choice - Calvin is found in the toils of exposition. Quoting EXODUS XXI, vv. 7 ff - "if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant" - he concludes that "many vices were tolerated in this people", and thus the Christian must rest rather in the protection /

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1 Dogmengeschichte IV, pp. 611-2.

2 This tendency is brought out clearly in the above article by Dr Warfield - op. cit. 166 ff, particularly. Even in 1536 Calvin had been saying, of the sacraments, "they can by themselves offer us no hope of salvation" (CR.XXIX.138). That is to say, salvation is a hidden gift of God which even the pious cannot extort. By 1559 he had four chapters on predestination (INST. 3: 21-24), which he was developing from his discussions on faith and justification. Compare his agnostic remarks in CR.LIV 263.

3 "The Rule of Faith", pp. 64 ff of Calvin he adds "that Calvin looked upon Scripture as a statute book of doctrine and morality, and that he held the mechanical and plenary theory of inspiration, is antecedently probable from his intellectual constitution and legal training, and this is strongly supported by the terms in which he usually touches on the subject." Of this judgment Calvin might, as Tawney says, justifiably remark, "I am not a Calvinist."

4 p. 242.

5 CR. LII, 650 ff.

protection which the law afforded to the unfortunate children involved. Again there is the reference to divorce in Deuteronomy, 24. Divorce, Calvin says, was allowed 'in indulgence'[1] to the Jews, yet Christ pronounced that it never was in accordance with God's Will. In other words, Calvin sets over against the ethics of the Old Testament the teaching of Jesus and the assent which the believer gives to that teaching. But, of course, he implies that really even the Old Testament "Fathers" also assented to the principle although they were permitted the "indulgence" of breaking it.[2]

The freedom of assent which could pass judgment even upon Holy Writ would not, however, while remaining Christian, lead to the dissolution of the social conventions. As the Spirit, for Paul, could not say "Jesus is accursed"[3] so, for Calvin, He could not say - as the Anabaptists were accused of making Him say - that marriage, property or human personality are of no account in God's sight.[4] The phrase which Calvin used for this common sense balance was "equity"[5], and this equity seems to remain a factor in his theology, even although he can speak with much greater reality of meaning than Luther, of the sinfulness of mankind. The Reformers were unanimous in their rejection /

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1 Ibid., 657-8.

2 So that the unity of Scripture is maintained, as the Westminster Confession requires (I, 9).

3 I COR. xii, 3.

4 A. C. Underwood, op. cit., pp. 23 ff. Calvin defines the order of civil polity as "securing to every individual the exclusive enjoyment of his property" - INST. 4: 1: 3.

5 "Naturalis equitas" INST. 4: 20: 16; équité naturelle CR. XXXVIII a, pp. 248: 264. In the former instance Calvin was discussing the basis of natural law as law: in the second, the more restricted problem of economic usury.

rejection of monkish asceticism precisely because they refused to believe in the devaluation of human personality as a result of sin.[1] That there was a dilemma of human nature Calvin has already been quoted as maintaining.[2] Responsibility and sin were both, and simultaneously, present in each individual, and his system rests upon that basic assertion. Thus, if he were no ascetic, hating existence, he was no sentimentalist, forgetful of the temptations that assail even the Christian in the act of receiving the symbols of divine grace and the Presence of a Risen Saviour.[3]

The subject matter of this chapter may be conveniently divided into the following heads; the problems of Scripture, abrogation, guilt, and finally law. Apart from the problems of Scripture and of "judicial" Law, the argument follows that of the first chapter that Calvin devotes to the subject of "Moral Law" in the Institutes.[4] The norm of Scripture he had already discussed at length, particularly in the first book, which, as has been already shown, grew out of the original assumptions of the 1536 Institutio, about our knowledge of God. The problem of judicial law he reserved for the discussion not of doctrine /

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1 Doumergue, op. cit., takes up this accusation of asceticism which was first made by Ritschl. He distinguishes asceticism as an end from self denial as a means of the good life.

2 See above, pp. 84 ff.

3 INST. I: cap. 9 contains the substance of his polemic against the Anabaptists. The point he stresses is that while the Spirit may seal the divine testimony of grace, the law of Christian living is found in the Word. "We are not favoured with daily oracles from heaven" (INST. 1: 7: 1). Obedience too is a daily exercise of human responsibility, a discipline requiring constant vigilance while we are in this flesh (INST. 3: 3: 14).

4 INST. 2: 7.

doctrine itself, but the application of doctrine to practical conduct in Church and State.[1]

(ii) Calvin's Biblicism.

Professor Tawney[2] describes the Calvinist Church as "an army marching back to Canaan, under orders delivered once for all from Sinai." Its system, he says, was "more Roman than Christian, and more Jewish than either." The description has the point and the inaccuracy of a half-truth. It is certainly not true that Calvinist polity was in any sense "marching back". Geneva was, in its economy and its social order, a modern city compared with, for example, Wittenberg. Moreover, its vision was the future, not the past. Calvin, however, remained conservative in his ideas of, for example, monarchy and aristocracy. He was no "monarchomachist".[3] But, as will be seen, his objection to monarchomachism was not a mere negation, the fear to take a necessary step. Calvin was not a monarchomachist because he objected to the subjective implications of the natural law which monarchomachism invoked. When he looked to Sinai he was not looking to the past, but looking to eternity, which is neither past nor future.[4] The working of the Old Testament figures, such as Samuel, Jonah, and Elijah, upon his "tense imagination" /

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1 INST. 4: 20.

2 Op. cit., pp. 117: 127: 128.

3 Chenevière, op. cit., pp. 11 ff, etc. Scott Pearson, op. cit., pp. 76 ff.

4 Thus he regarded the polity of the Old Testament as the clearest example of a Decalogue - politics, but not necessarily an example to be slavishly followed in 16th century Geneva.

imagination" can be exaggerated. In so far as they represented the working of the eternal Spirit of God in history they were relevant to Calvin's thoughts but they were in themselves mere "organs" of God. Tawney is more accurate in his comparison between this Biblical inspiration and the inspiration of Brutus and Cassius to "the men of 1793". Every social code needs a slogan. That of 1793 was the power of Reason: that of 1535 was the power of Scripture.

To some extent Professor Tawney declares his own attitude when he dismisses the core of Calvin's theology as beyond the judgment of an amateur.[1] The dilemma of that primary statement has already been discussed. It is, of course, deliberate, not because Calvin repudiated logical tidiness but because he accepted as one of the factors of the human situation the mystery of divine intervention. The attempt to describe God in terms of impersonal absolutes and His Law in terms of abstract nature has little place in Calvin's thought.[2] Primarily he is content to know of God that which He has seen fit to reveal in His Scriptures, and to deduce from this body of knowledge alone the proper life of faith.[3] What Milton ascribed to Virtue,[4] then, might be transferred to Calvin's view of Scripture.

> "[Scripture] could see to do what [Scripture] would
> By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
> Were in the flat sea sunk."

To /

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[1] Op. cit., 108: the reference is to Calvin's summary of predestination. INST. 3: 21: 7 and 23: 7.

[2] E.g., INST., 1: 5: 9.

[3] Warfield makes this point in the article quoted, op. cit., 138 ff.

[4] Comus, ll. 373 ff.

To him Scripture carried its own conviction. It was not a collection of fragmentary texts to be co-ordinated by "natural" wisdom or ecclesiastical authority but a record of the authentic utterance of God. This interpretation of Scripture may not be self-evident wisdom, but it is the characteristic interpretation of all the Reformers by which they refashioned the conduct and the thought-forms of European society. A Protestant believed that he was "ever in the great Task-master's eye" as an individual, and that his every action was weighed in a balance, the measure of which he himself possessed in Scripture. Mystery there might be about God's Providence, but there was no mystery about what God actually willed all men to do here and now; and the events of Scripture were illustrations of the working of His eternal Will. Men had Moses and the prophets, whose teaching was enough to bring them to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Reference has already been made to a criticism of Calvin that even he was committed "to a completely verbal and mechanical theory of inspiration".[1] The same critic added that he, Calvin, had also fallen into "the medieval error that the source of authority is necessarily to be found in some place wholly outside the individual." That judgment is true in only a limited sense. It is true, for example, that Calvin repudiated, or perhaps never even considered, the modern conception of human salvation by human means. For many reasons the medieval thinker distrusted the individual as an individual, and sought refuge in social groupings. The physical life of the individual /

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[1] Davies, op. cit. p. 153.

individualwas too insecure to permit of our modern confidence. Sickness within and the horrors of nature without surrounded the brief candle of humanity with darkness and encouraged the invocation of the eternal powers.

Moreover, society was itself insecure. The utter disaster which overtook Rome at the hands of the Gothic hordes still vibrated in Christendom. There was neither understanding nor hope of controlling the powers of ethnic movement. Chaos was round about Christendom,[1] and sometimes even within its borders. The arm of law was comparatively short and therefore the scope for outlawry was considerably greater than it is supposed to be to-day. Christendom, therefore, was not likely to elect for the dissolution of that external civilisation which had come to it through Rome by the Gospel-teachers, and to embark on the hazardous task of beating out a new philosophy of the individual. That experiment was not begun before the 18th century;[2] and to-day, with civilisation itself a broken tool, it is perhaps natural that one should still look to the individual as the means of restoring to society its equilibrium. It is upon this point of view that condemnation of Calvin for destroying Servetus rests, the argument being that Servetus had rights as an individual, whatever his theological /

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1 In Luther's Germany, the fear of Turkish invasion was a constant factor. The frequency of the plague was another factor of insecurity. Economic change with its inevitable associate, social insecurity, was a third. Lindsay I, p. 129.

2 Particularly in France. The consequent questioning of the family as the smallest unit in the social structure was first expressed in England by Godwin and Shelley.

theological views. It would have been a meaningless argument to both men.

Another form of this criticism is the horror at Calvin's description of the prophets as the mere mouthpieces of God. It may be no defence of Christian doctrine to remark that Plato held a similar view.[1] In his state the greatest good of the individual might be rejected in favour of the greatest good of the community. This judgment was passed upon the highest classes of the group, but it was equally true of all classes, and included by implication the slave status of the bottom strata. One passes over the similar restrictions of the modern welfare state. The fact is that absolute freedom for the individual is incompatible with society[2] and therefore with his own individuality. But in the Christian community the question is not limited to the choice of freedom and slavery. The over-riding service of Almighty God transforms all human relationships. Because the individual is the creature and the servant of God he can neither be a tyrant nor a slave. Individual liberty that cannot suffer employment even for the secular state is an elixir too delicate for the workaday world, and service which cannot be joyfully offered to Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us is too mean for a Christian state. Perhaps even the character of the individual may most truly find itself by being /

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1 Republic IV, ab. init.

2 So Buber in "I and Thou", (E.T. 1937).

being lost in the divine service.[1]

The problem of Scripture, however, is perhaps more correctly associated with the problem of knowledge, particularly ethical knowledge. The question at issue for the Reformers was constantly, "What am I to do?"[1] whether to obey the mandate of the Church (of Rome) or on what grounds to disobey it.[3] The alternative was apparently to do simply what Scripture should say[4]: but Scripture was found to contain a regulative principle by which certain teachings contained within its own covers were criticised and even rejected by others. And yet Scripture could not simply be rejected by Christians. Even Rome did not reject Scripture but merely claimed the absolute right of its interpretation. Nor yet could one take refuge in the individual although clearly Scripture demanded the consent of the individual to the divine Word. The issue of Scripture lay between "revelation" and "inspiration". According to Dr Cadier,[5] inspiration is for Calvin "the act by which the Holy Spirit has given to apostles and prophets (the power) to write the holy books without making them the authentic records in which God has placed His truth."[6] The principle that distinguishes our religion from all others is that we know that God has spoken and are certainly assured that the prophets have not spoken in their own understanding but that "as organs and instruments /

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1 ST. MARK VIII, 35.
2 Warfield, op. cit.
3 Warfield, op. cit., p. 167.
4 Heyer points out how strongly Farel appealed to Scripture as the sole norm of ethical knowledge: see above, cap. 3.
5 op. cit.
6 Referring to INST., 1: 6: 3.

instruments of the Holy Spirit they have announced what they received from on high . . . that it was the mouth of God which had spoken."[1] Revelation, on the other hand, is "a miracle, for a particular person in a particular situation" - the interior proof corresponding to a natural knowledge of God.[2] This knowledge is, of course, corrupted; but Scripture breaks through the obscurity of sin.[3]

Calvin's answer to the question, "What to do?" would thus be in two parts. Let a man study Scripture, for in and through Scripture God will speak to that man as He has spoken before. But the revelation itself can be tested by its coherence with other acts of revelation, so that the man who simply claims knowledge of God's leading without being able to dispute about it and place it in its relationship to a recognisable pattern, is not really in possession of a revelation at all. Hence his repudiation of the alleged "daily oracles" of the Anabaptists.[4] It is not altogether true that the mere ability to dispute about Scripture indicates a possession of its truth.[5] Scripture demands a humble and lowly spirit in its study.[6] The knowledge it contains is the secret of God,[7] and the Christian knowledge of the Christian man is comparable only /

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1 Referring to Commentary on II TIMOTHY III, 16. See also Warfield's article, op. cit., p. 159 for other phrases drawn from Calvin's writings.

2 Referring to INST. 1: 3: 1.

3 Referring to INST. 1: 6: 1.

4 See above, p.154 note 3.

5 Inst. 1: 7: 4. Compare Westminster Confession I, 5. Other references appear in INST. 1: 7: 5; 1: 8: 1; 1: 8: 13.

6 E.g. INST. 1: 7: 5.

7 i.e. in Scripture it is God, not man, who speaks - Comm. 2 PET. I,20 also INST. 1: 7: 4; 1: 7: 5; 1: 7: 13.

only to a new sense.[1] For step by step with Scripture reading there moves - for the elect at least - the testimony of the Holy Spirit.[2] But the knowledge imparted by Scripture is in a sense no secret at all. The Christian perceives that it is essentially the whole truth: that is to say, it is the truth for the unsaved as well as the saved, the truth which is patent to the unbeliever,[3] - or would be if the unbeliever were not blinded by sin.

It is upon this ethical basis that Calvin rests his doctrine of nature. Nature is the means by which all stand condemned, whether pleading guilt or innocence.[4] God's Will is known to us all, even if we have not been subject to the discipline of the Old Testament polity. The Decalogue made the Old Testament polity, but it also made our conscience. The problem of conduct for the Christian is never ignorance but always sin.

(iii) The Problem of Abrogation

Scripture itself patently implies the necessity of selection amongst its doctrines, a purpose and development of its history. The study of history in Calvin's time was not, as it now is, a search for that elusive "Ding an Sich" - what "actually" happened. To us, therefore, his historical statements may appear naive, but in fact they are merely succinct expressions of the principle that is fundamental /

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1 "Sensus" - INST. 1: 7: 5. He compares it with ordinary sensory perception - INST. 1: 7: 2.

2 INST., 1: 6: 1, 1: 6: 3, 1: 7: 5.

3 INST., 1: 5 passim.

4 INST., 1: 5: 1, 2: 6: 1, 2: 6: 14.

fundamental to all Christian thought - that the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Calvin's opening sentence of the chapter on "Moral Law" illustrates this principle. "The Law was not superadded about four hundred years after the death of Abraham in order that it might lead the chosen people away from Christ, but on the contrary, to keep them in suspense until His advent; to inflame their desire, and confirm their expectation, and that they might not become dispirited by the long delay."[1] As history it is inadequate according to scientific standards of accuracy. Too much, however, can be made of this historical inaccuracy, even when he proceeds to the assertion, "it is to be observed that the Kingdom, which was at length erected in the family of David, is part of the Law, and is comprehended under the dispensation of Moses".[2] Calvin's literalism was neither that of Rome which proceeded to express every detail in terms of ecclesiastical symbolism nor yet the literalism of the evangelical who will refuse rabbit and shellfish because of the Levitical commandments.[3] He may be accused of straining his texts on occasion but he stands in the company of Paul,[4] and with Paul he emphasises the basic principle of annexing the Old Testament for the glory of Christ.

That is to say, as an Evangelical Christian Calvin brought Scripture to the bar of his faith. If all is fulfilled in "this Jesus" /

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1 INST., 2: 7: 1.
2 Ibid.
3 LEV. XI, 3 ff: 9 ff.
4 E.g. GAL. IV, 24-5.

Jesus" it is clear that certain parts can no longer retain their apparent implication. They must be abrogated. Yet since Scripture is as a whole the Word of God, abrogation of any of its parts cannot mean mere dismissal. Christian logic requires the dogma that every Old Testament institution should be given a New Testament significance. The key word of Old Testament criticism is thus "pattern" - a word which was being used already in the Old Testament[1] to emphasise the divine significance of earthly institutions, and which in HEBREWS[2] was made the clue to the embodiment in Christ of the offices of King and Priest. This view is not altogether at variance with scientific common sense. In the question which Calvin asks, for example, - "what could be more frivolous than for men to reconcile themselves to God, by offering Him the foul odour produced by burning the fat of beasts, or to wipe away their own impurities by besprinkling themselves with water or blood?"[3] - the answer of the anthropologist is similar to that of the Christian dogmatist. Both may assume that the men concerned did really believe in the efficacy of the practice and both have to answer two questions; is the belief the expression of a genuine human need, and if so, is the practice adequate to produce satisfaction of the need? Too often the anthropologist is a mere spectator, criticising the practice without seeing the spiritual motive. Criticism without reference to

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[1] NUM. VIII, 4: EX. XXV., 9.
[2] HEB. VIII, 5.
[3] INST. 2: 7: 1.

to an alternative philosophy is as foolish as the superstition itself. Christian logic offers an interpretation on the basis of a possible faith. These practices were ordained as a "schoolmaster's"[1] lesson to bring the "Fathers" to a Christ they would not see in the flesh. Elsewhere[2] Calvin says that the very inadequacy of the rites became a lesson to the Fathers of their hopes of immortality. The anthropologist may offer his interpretation in terms of the primacy of scientific thought, the Christian answers in terms of theprimacy of Christ.

Calvin applies his principle of interpretation with logical thoroughness to the consideration of the Law. Christ is the Climax of the Old Testament and is, therefore, assumed to be also the inner meaning of it. He is the End of the Law.[3] But for the same reason He is also its Beginning. He fulfils the Law and therefore somehow the Law foreshadows Him. He is Alpha as well as Omega. The Law is "not only the Ten Commandments . . . but the whole system of religion delivered by the hand of Moses",[4] and therefore, although the Ten Commandments may carry eternal value, the "ceremonial" is also significant, and may indeed be said to have eternal value also. "Abrogation", in short, cannot be permitted to imply the mere setting aside of ceremony, for if it did, the Christian would be in danger of a spiritual legalism as the only alternative to a Christian libertinism. Moreover, abrogation [redacted] must apply also to /

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[1] GAL. III, 24. Quoted INST., 2: 7: 2.

[2] INST. 2: 7: 17.

[3] ROM. X, 4. Calvin used this text in his introduction to the Genevan Bible.

[4] INST. 2: 7: 1.

to the "moral" Law. Both "ceremonial" and "moral" are thus epithets of the one term, "Law", and must, in a Christian sense, be both interpreted in terms of the revealed Will of God in Christ. In other words, the Christian refers both aspects of the Law beyond the mere appearance of the Law as ceremony or as precept to a more ultimate revelation of the divine Will. Whether that revelation is to be identified with the Decalogue or with some other conception of Law remains for later consideration. The point to be stressed here is that "abrogation" as a Christian concept does not turn upon human acceptance or rejection of either "ceremonial" or "moral" Law; but of the subsumption of both in Christ. It was precisely because the Roman Church, like the Pharisees, wilfully maintained the former against the revelation of Christ, and the spiritual libertines maintained the latter against the revelation of Scripture that the Reformers appealed to Paul as the apostle of the Truth.

Calvin can say, therefore, that[1] "it would be impossible to understand for what purpose they - the Old Testament sacrifices - were instituted" apart from Christ's sacrifice. He means that they were part of the Covenant which God made with Abraham and fulfilled in Christ. Thus he says of the actual practice of the sacrifices[2] - quoting Augustine - that they were "more confession than expiation of sins" and thus brought the worshipper by acknowledgment of guilt to "the same grace as ourselves". "Ceremonial" Law in practice was thus /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 16.

2 INST. 2: 7: 17.

thus in a measure "moral" Law. When men strove to put themselves right with God by means of blood-shedding and by such personal acts of sacrifice as keeping feasts and fasts, tithing property and obedience in general to the various precepts, they were conscious of directing their conduct along a path of "moral" duty. In Christ, believers are relieved from the incessant burden of the duties, but not from the moral obligation which underlay them. To say this is not, of course, to say that a Christian has no duties. It is to say, first, that the doing of duties is not a means that leads to Christian salvation; and secondly, that Christian conduct springs from love, not fear. Calvin enlarges on this theme in the last chapter of the work. (INST. 4: 20) So this doctrine of the "ceremonial" Law implies the abrogation in Christ of the "moral" Law too. Obedience to the moral Law is not the same thing for a Christian as it is for a non-Christian, whether he be a "Father" of the Old Testament or an unbeliever in the New. For the non-Christian, the "moral" Law is an intolerable burden since he is beyond assurance of salvation but not beyond knowledge of God, and since his knowledge of God is, whether he likes or not, moral knowledge. In other words, he cannot escape the condemnation of God; in fact, he condemns himself.[1] But the majesty of the Law is for the Christian only a means to the end of salvation, a burden laid upon him to bring him into the humility of repentance. The non-Christian, making the means /

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[1] Compare ST. JOHN, III, vv. 18-21.

means itself an end, and therefore presuming to attempt in his own strength what God alone can fulfil, inevitably falls either into despair or, worse, into self conceit about a romanticised and therefore a restricted legal obedience, which ultimately denies the necessity of the Holy Spirit's energies.

Towards the end of the chapter under review[1] Calvin attacks the Anabaptists' view that the word "ordinance" in COLOSSIANS ii, 13-14, should be taken to include not only "rites of absolution and sacrifice, by which the Jews were consecrated to the Lord", but also the "injunctions of the Law." It is this difference between "rite" and "injunction" that makes the difference between "ceremonial" and "moral" Law. It might be said that the former is abrogated in its use but not in its effect, the latter abrogated in the opposite sense, namely in its effect but not in its use. This is the fundamental distinction in Calvin's ethical thought. On the one hand, the sacrificial work of Christ is adequately accounted for; the believer, as he takes bread and wine into his mouth, learns by faith that he receives the benefits that the patriarchs laboured to attain. No sacrifice need be made now. It has been made in its fulfilment once for all, and may be now enjoyed by faith in that fulness. The effect remains; the use is discarded. On the other hand, the effect of the "moral" Law is abrogated in the sense that the illusion of possible obedience is once for all dispelled by the sight of Christ's absolute obedience, but its use is not abrogated because we still owe the same obedience. /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 17.

obedience. Even the Christian, coming from the Table of the Lord, having enjoyed the full benefits of the sacrifice done once for all on Calvary, is still involved in a warfare of the spirit, for, so long as men are in this body of flesh they are capable of sin and incapable of fulfilling what God demands. The Anabaptist doctrine of "assurance" was an error if by assurance it meant that the Christian is set free from obedience, for even if he were saved from the effect of the curse that all who are under the Covenant know is the reward of sin, he would still need a discipline of the soul.[1]

Whether this view is consistent with the spirit of Christian faith will no doubt remain in dispute until the end of time; and in such disputation Calvin's view will be, certainly by some, advanced as strictly speaking an expression of his personal distrust of his contemporary Anabaptist opponents. This criticism is less than just, though not, as will be said later, altogether unjust. Christian obedience to the Law does not necessarily mean a return to bondage. The highest doctrine of Communion is consistent with such obedience; at least, if one means to say that when the communicant by faith enters into heavenly places, the universe that he sees from the divine standpoint is an ordered universe. From such a flight of faith he will return to daily life a disciplined man, no longer a recalcitrant slave. That is to say, having seen the Will of God, and having seen God Himself obey that Will, he delivers himself over to the same obedience, willingly and in love. And in so far as he is yet subordinate - and therefore fallible -, and human - and therefore open to temptation -, he /

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[1] Mitchell Hunter, op. cit., pp. 110 ff.
The Twelfth Sermon - CR. LIV, 374-5.

he will give himself assiduously to training of body and spirit. It is, of course, true that the Anabaptist might exclaim against the permission by God of sin in the faithful. Calvin is content to state as mere fact that we are, in this life, upon a pilgrimage.[1]

Does this view invalidate the function of the Holy Spirit? Is this mere legalism, as Brunner suggests? It is at least not inconsistent with the dynamic character of Reformed faith as distinct from the repetitive and static reference of the Mass. The activity of Reformed faith allows for the directness and even the unpredictability of God's working in history, and is thus constantly moving in adjustment to the ever changing combination of human environment on the one side and the activity of God throuvh the Holy Spirit in men's hearts on the other. In other words, if the Christian does not enjoy "daily oracles" he still has to offer daily obedience, which demands constant vigilance. Knowledge of,and co-operation with, this action and reaction is true Christian freedom or - which is the same thing - true Christian discipline. And it is discipline in the highest sense, because it implies knowledge as well as obedience. God's action is never outside the pattern which He has laid down for our guidance once for all in His Covenant and in His Christ. The Spirit may say strange and hard things to us, but they can always, on reflection, be fitted into a known pattern.

Again, /

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[1] INST. 3: 3: 20. The reference "in carcere corporis nostri" implies eventual release. As Doumergue points out, op. cit., pp. 39 ff, this fact does not mean that earth has no pleasures. The fact of sin is itself aggravated by the continual revelation of God's bounty in Nature. Hence Christian conduct is not without its material reward.

Again, Christian liberty does not mean doing what we like in absolute independence; it means being so transformed that we see and desire what God likes.[1] Thus for the Christian it is true both that Moses is more than a Solon or a Lycurgus - great but human law-givers - and also that the "ceremonial" part of the Mosaic Law is fulfilled in the Christian sacraments, and is therefore no longer to be striven after but to be enjoyed by faith. "By the death of Christ the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, the living and express image of heavenly things, which had begun to be dimly shadowed forth, being now brought fully into view."[2] In the very act of bringing the need for sacrifice to an end Christ illuminated its eternal purpose.

Calvin sums up his position with an exposition of ROMANS X, 4: "It is vain to teach righteousness by precept until Christ bestow it by free imputation and the regeneration of the Spirit . . . Christ (is) the end or fulfilling of the Law, because it would avail us nothing to know what God demands, did not Christ come to the succour of those who are labouring, and oppressed under an intolerable yoke and burden." The assumptions of this are clear. Grotian lawyers err in the assumption of the possible immorality of God. Judaisers equally err in the assumption of human aspirations to obedience without grace. God for Calvin is a Being Himself moral, although why He should be moral there is no saying. So far as we are concerned, all depends upon His mere will, His gratuitous Word,[3] but in fact /

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[1] INST. 2: 7: 16.
[2] INST. 2: 7: 2.
[3] INST. 3: 23: 7.

fact we can depend upon that Word as having a moral - though to us still an unknown - end. And God has made us in His image. That is to say, we know this much of the Divine Nature, - that we owe a right obedience to Him, and that disobedience must, in the nature of things, bring punishment. Such knowledge is natural in the sense that it is part of human mentality. What the Christian by faith knows is that out of inevitable condemnation there is an escape in Christ which violates neither God's justice nor human freedom.

The place of the Decalogue in this exposition may be stated briefly. All Law is revealed since it is part of God's creation of man. The Decalogue is revelation par excellence since it is delivered in Scripture. It is not a code since it is the spirit of the codes just as conscience is the spirit of every natural attempt to reach adjustment with the universe. In Christ, of course, it is abrogated in its effect of condemnation, but not in its use, since men remain men in body and in environment. It is only their affections which faith transforms. Therefore the Decalogue, since it is the epitome of the Divine will, remains into Christian obedience.

(iv) The Problem of Guilt.

The keyword in Calvin's interpretation of Law is "guilt". Guilt implies two factors - the moral error and the possibility of avoiding the error; in other words, responsibility. The fact that the accused pleads "not guilty" is still a tacit admission on his part of the Court's jurisdiction. "Not guilty" is a personal plea. If /

If he denies the jurisdiction of the Court altogether, he might be further charged with contempt or else detained as mentally unfit to understand the charge. In short, the ascription of guilt is not made simply on an arbitrary standard, like Humpty Dumpty's in "Alice". It implies the mutual acceptance by Court and accused of one another's validity. The only exception arises where the Court declares the accused not, strictly speaking, a person.

In discussing the "moral" Law Calvin brings out all these points.[1] It "renders us inexcusable" by setting before us "a perfect righteousness", a standard whose "complete observance is perfect righteousness in the sight of God, . . . a righteousness by which a man may be deemed and pronounced righteous at the divine tribunal". That is to say, the standard of human justice is Divine, and moreover, it is this standard that human beings imply when they speak of "justice". What we know about right and wrong, therefore, is knowledge of the absolute. The only just Person may be God Himself, but we recognise His absolute justice and His absolute demand upon our relative powers of obedience.

Like Paul, Calvin was not a respecter of persons. He was strongly inclined to the text, "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest." On this theme, indeed, he sets the first chapters of the "Institutes."[2] Religion, he says, is always finally knowledge of the one True God.[3] Even the heathen is worshipping that God; even the atheist[4] and the reprobate.[5]

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1 INST. 2: 7: 3.
2 See INST. 1: 4: 1.
3 1: 3: 1.
4 1: 3: 2.
5 1: 4: 4.

The worship of God is the only thing which renders men superior to brutes.[1] If on the one hand no legitimate religion is unconnected with truth,[2] on the other no human mind is to be permitted an ignorance of the Deity.[3] Nevertheless, no genuine piety remains in the world.[4] None. It is easy to work out the argument with reference to deliberate unbelievers and unevangelised heathen: it is understandable even to describe the Jews as those to whom "Christ was not yet familiarly known", "like children, whose weakness cannot bear a full knowledge of heavenly things".[5] But are we, as Christians newly come from the communion of the Lord's Supper, to regard ourselves as sinners of the same dye of ignorance or rebellion? This is obviously a delicate question, for if the believer is to be left in his natural sins there is left open a doubt whether the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is really effective. Calvin says[6] that "when we have learned that the promises would be fruitless and unavailing did not God accept us of His free goodness, without any view to our works . . . and by faith embrace the goodness thus offered in the gospel, the promises, with all their annexed conditions, are fully accomplished." He goes further and remarks that[7] "God, while bestowing all things upon us freely, crowns his goodness by not disdaining our imperfect obedience; forgiving all its /

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1 INST., 1: 3: 3.
2 1: 4: 3.
3 1: 3: 1.
4 1: 4: 1.
5 2: 7: 2.
6 2: 7: 4.
7 Ibid.

its deficiencies, accepting it as if it were complete, and so bestowing upon us the full amount of what the Law has promised". Having let this Pelagian remark escape, however, he hastens to withdraw it.[1] Setting aside the circumlocutions of the Fathers, - "what Jerome thought, I care not; let us enquire into the truth" - he dismisses any suggestion of perfectionism. "I will not enter into a long discussion on the various kinds of possibility. By impossible, I mean, that which never was, and being prevented by the ordination and decree of God, never will be. I say, that if we go back to the remotest period, we shall not find a single saint, who, clothed with a mortal body, ever attained to such perfection as to love the Lord with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and on the other hand, not one who has not felt the power of concupiscence." "It is incontrovertible, that, in consequence of the feebleness of our nature, it is impossible to us, so long as we are in the flesh, to fulfil the law."[2]

It has already been observed that Calvin was content to stand upon this position. He was prepared, that is, to admit many transient blessings to the righteous man, but at all times to deny any relief to the tension of faith. We receive heavenly things, not, as the Jews, under a type, but in the reality of a Holy Spirit's energies. We are called to our obedience which is motivated by love and understanding. Nevertheless, he returns to this /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 5.

2 Ibid.

this assertion of guilt. Dr. Niebuhr,[1] comparing Augustine, Luther and Calvin, says that Calvin offers the profoundest analysis and Christian interpretation of human nature, but points out the failure of all to deal as straightforwardly as their common master, Paul, does, with the mystical side of the question. All are afraid of the Schwärmerei which might lead to Antinomianism. The mystical element of faith was thus, by Augustine, canalised into churchmanship, by Luther, vapourised into a sort of halo about the fulfilment of mere civil obedience, and by Calvin, transferred from individual experience to the corporate experience of the assembly. The result has been, for Romanism, a two-fold standard of lay moralism and clerical pietism, and for Protestantism an extreme alternation between shallow Deism and uncontrolled "evangelism". Calvin's dismissal of the saints - "I am indeed aware of a kind of saint whom a foolish superstition imagines and whose purity the angels of heaven scarcely equal" - is almost cynical.[2] This is indeed Calvin "accusativus".[3] It is not even a fair estimate. No saint ever calls himself such. That title is bestowed, and is usually denied by all that the recipient ever says about himself. He knows that,

"they who fain would serve Thee best
"Are conscious most of wrong within."

There was no insincerity in Paul's reference to the "enmity"[4] to Christ /

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[1] Niebuhr, "Human Nature", pp. 168ff.

[2] INST. 2: 7: 5. Cf. the reference to Epicurus in 1: 2: 2; also C.R. LIV, 425

[3] His nickname at school, according to Francois Baudoin - Walker, op. cit., p. 42.

[4] ROMANS V.

Christ, which made him chief of sinners, and at the same time the miracle of the Damascus road which bore in him the Christian experience of patience, hope, joy. These are terms of emotion, or, to use a term of Calvin's, affection. Yet it seems precisely this affection that he is curbing. Perhaps it is too much to say that salvation for him was simply a matter of intellect. But, as Niesel[1] points out, there is a significant "until" in Calvin's eschatology. We do not reach perfection in time by some gradual development. Very definitely we are members of the Body of which Christ is the Head, - and unworthy, one might almost say wayward, members, needing a constant discipline, that is to say, a constant vigilance and a constant support by the external structures of church, state, and family.

In fairness to Calvin, however, one has to take note of a domestic as well as a public expression of his faith. Niesel quotes a letter[2] in which he breathes a more assured enjoyment of the promises of God. It is true that the present enjoyment is still of a promise not of the fulfilment, but the expectation itself is a characteristic privilege of believers, binding them together into a brotherhood. This personal assurance appears in other expressions of Calvin's faith, in his fortitude under sorrow,[3] for example, in his utter courage under personal danger,[4] perhaps even in the certainty of his own utter rightness.[5] Perhaps one might interpret in these terms the /

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1 Op. cit., pp. 119 ff.

2 Ibid.

3 Letters quoted by Reyburn, Op. cit., pp. 146 ff.

4 Ibid., p. 164.

5 This absolute certainty was characteristic also of Cromwell - [John Buchan, "Oliver Cromwell"]. In his case it was often preceded by periods of doubtings and uncertainties: but these were matters for the closet, not the field or the council chamber.

the remark which has been derived by Professor Souček from Barth's "Dogmatik" - namely that sin is, strictly speaking, a human phenomenon. God cannot hold sin as a real opposition to His Almighty plan; and the believer, looking upon human nature from the point of view of grace, realises that, while sin is the most real factor of the human situation, yet in a sense it is already done away in Christ. That is to say, as a social phenomenon sin is all important: as a phenomenon of faith it is, ex hypothesi, an appearance. The corollary is that whatever one may dimly perceive in the act of faith the keynote of public life, whether applying to one's own daily conduct or to public business is discipline, because of sin. It was the error of Servetus, he said, that by faith in the Gospel "we receive the completion of all the promises".[1]

The universality of guilt - the totality of depravity - is a doctrine not without its own implications. If it sets the tone of Calvinist society very definitely in terms of discipline[2] it does not escape inevitable distinction between those who obey and those who do not obey, the Law of God. Calvin has already been detected in this Pelagian sentiment.[3] Nor was it possible to escape. Granted that all is of God, that man has had his chance in Adam and by Adam's sin is a mass of corruption; granted that this fact, together with the self-revelation of the Almighty, is deposited unalterably in Scripture as fulfilled in Christ, the fact still remains that knowledge of this state is in the possession of particular individuals, the believers, who in turn actualise the will /

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1 INST., 2: 9: 3.
2 Seeberg, op. cit., p. 612
3 See above, page 175 .

will of God as far as it can be actualised, amongst men. Geneva itself is an example of a state dominated by a ruling class, which in Calvin's later years centred upon Calvin himself. Perhaps he might say that his salvation was by the imputed justification of Christ, that it rested upon no certainty but upon the gratuitous promises of God. He might even not be numbered with the elect. But of the Law which he strove to administer he had no doubts whatever. Such knowledge might, of course, be urged as the unwelcome heritage even of the reprobate, but it was, in Calvin's own case, knowledge which was received as of God and obedience that was striven after. Calvin may not have been a democrat in the sense in which we use the term to-day.[1] He did not believe that every individual, merely as such, should have the right to an opinion. No one of that generation held the view as we hold it. Even the Anabaptists were, at this stage of their history, unwilling to keep their private opinions to themselves. Opinion was a dynamic urge. One held an opinion of absolute truth and therefore inevitably urged it upon the society in which one lived. Even Servetus,[2] while in prison, urged the magistrates not to release him but to vindicate him. Thus he desired by implication the imprisonment of Calvin. Calvin's view of society, therefore, was of a system in which opportunity was open to talent and particularly to character;[3] and as the test of character he urged the acceptance by every citizen of an agreed creed. Indeed, for the ultimate good of /

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1 Cheneviere, op. cit., Introduction.
2 Rilliet, op. cit., pp. 188-9.
3 Tawney, op. cit.

of Geneva he was prepared to press for the acceptance into citizen rights of foreign persons whose religious views were sound. In short, Calvin's political aim for Geneva was the creation of a class of "believers" who would vote and generally act according to the Word of God. The same principle underlay the Calvinist view of monarchy. Their policy was to influence the king through his membership of the Church. His prime advisers were thus the ministers and in general the consistorial body.[1] These Christians might seek no personal glory, but they were conscious of being the mouthpiece of the most High.

Alongside the obedience of the few lay the responsibility of all. Something has already been said about this responsibility. Neither the heathen in his darkness nor the reprobate in his denial were excused. The basic principle of Christian law was that all rational beings were aware of their duty. Barth's dictum that Calvin rested upon the deduction, "all correct knowledge of God originates in obedience", is only partly accurate. It is true in the sense that theology rests upon active faith in Christ: it is not true in the sense that one condemns the sinner not for his incorrect knowledge but for his disobedience to the Light. If this seems a hard principle, the only Christian alternative is harder. Christian faith cannot compromise with the world; if it does not actively set about ordering the disorder it must abandon the disorder to its inevitable fate. Such, according to Troeltsch,[2] was /

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[1] Scott Pearson, op. cit., pp. 61 ff, etc.

[2] Social teaching, pp. 145 ff.

was the prevailing tendency of the early church. Theoretically it was also the ultimate refuge of Calvin. He frequently spoke of leaving Geneva, and it is said[1] that the Calvinist method of claiming political power in a state - failing success in controlling the monarch or the magistracy - was "to suffer or to abandon the public church"; that is, to become a sect. But Calvinism was inherently not sectarian: its ultimate aim was always the domination of public opinion. The reason for this desire is quite clear. The obedience of the believer and the responsibility of the unbeliever was towards a Law whose knowledge is inescapable. It is the "one perpetual and inflexible rule of life," obedience upon which is relevant not only to "a single age . . . (but) . . . to all ages, even to the end of the world."[2] If then a man undertakes the obedience of God he undertakes obedience not only for himself, but, as far as lies within his power of influence, obedience for all.

The assertion of total depravity, interpreted in ethical terms, thus leads to views about human nature and a political philosophy which at first sight seem at variance with the original statement. Since depravity concerns will rather than being - men remain men[3] - it follows that the divine Will can still be known and, to a degree, obeyed. Perfection might be denied but a good life, as distinct from a bad life, could be maintained, a right state as distinct from chaos or from an anti-christian system. And the operators of such a state were to be confessed believers in Jesus Christ. Thus Calvin is led to deductions about individual personality /

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[1] Nobbs, "Theocracy and Toleration" (1938) pp. 26-7.
[2] INST., 2: 7: 13.
[3] INST., 2: 1: 11, 2: 3: 12-16, etc. See Torrance, op. cit., pp.88 ff.

personality and about the efficacy of political laws. Neither are to be dismissed as of no consequence. The fact of condemning the recalcitrant asserts his responsibility towards, and therefore his knowledge of, God. The claim to dominate society in the Name of God implies the relevance to human conduct of such rules and regulations as may be deducible from the revelation of God's Will. In other words, one has to discuss "natural" law and "judicial" law.

(v) Judicial Law

Judicial law may be taken first since it follows the main theme of the believer's duty to rule. Calvin's discussion is separate from his main discussion on "moral" Law, but it is not independent of it. Whether in church or in state the operating factors are God's revelation and man's obedience or at least his responsibility. It does not by any means follow that we are to apply the Mosaic judicial law to our own times. Mosaic law represents a right obedience to God - the only right interpretation in pre-Christian ages in fact. But it is not the best interpretation of God's Will since Christ was known to these Fathers only under a type. Christians are in a position to adjust their conduct more closely to the will of God; indeed they are bound to do so. Calvin is thus not open to the accusation of legalism if by legalism one means mere slavery to a received body of precept. There is a strong dynamic element in his ethics. Right conduct for /

for him does not depend simply upon the Bible as written: it depends also upon faith. Thus Calvin can and does criticise Old Testament standards - concerning divorce, for example. At the same time Calvinism is legalistic if by the term one means that faith is bound to consider the relevance of such external factors of human existence as state, family, business, war, and so on. To him there is a right Christian state as there had been a right state of Israel.

Calvin did not wish, then, to impose a Mosaic system upon Christian society. He felt that Christian faith had its own implications to work out. But Christian faith, like Jewish faith, was not without guidance in the matter of interpretation. Both are attempts to express a revelation which essentially has never changed. And this revelation is assumed for every state. That is to say, there is but one right state, as there is but one right Church. Although, therefore, he did not propose to overthrow other systems, he was prepared to criticise them, just as he would criticise the personal philosophy of an individual. He was not an anarchist. He believed in the institutions of church, state and family. He believed also in the relevance of the individual, and therefore in his liberty to create state systems according to his lights. But these systems, like the conduct of individual men, were of necessity to be measured by the yardstick of the divine will. The inevitable conclusion is that, as Servetus was eliminated from Geneva, nations of other creeds would ultimately be in conflict with the right Christian state.

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The subject is dealt with in the fourth book of the "Institutes". The problem of the right Church occupies most of the argument since, of course, all depends upon the fostering of right faith,[1] which reckons by individual freedom, and not by force.[2] And in the first place, Calvin is concerned to lay down the limits of self-determination. Of the three headings under which he discusses the matter, the first two emphasise the necessary attachment of the Church to the plain fact of revelation. The power of the Church does not allow of any addition to the doctrine contained in the Word,[3] nor does it allow any interpretation other than what may be found in the Scriptures.[4] That is to say, Calvin is maintaining the sufficiency of Scripture, as read under the invocation of the Holy Spirit, over against the decisions and councils of Rome. He is not condemning either bishops or councils as such. He is concerned merely to emphasise the principle that the ultimate authority in such matters belongs to the Holy Spirit, that it is mediated to us through Scripture, that its end is edification and not destruction, and that, strictly, the interpreters are interpreters, and not creators. The personal element in the ministry is strictly subordinate to the office.[5] The important end is to clarify the rule which /

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1 INST. 4: 10: 1.
2 INST. 4: 11: 3-5.
3 INST. 4: 9: 13.
4 Ibid.
5 INST. 4: 8: 1-2.

which God has prescribed.[1]

The power of the Church to legislate consists of the same limitations. The distinction which Calvin emphasises is between human traditions and "holy and useful constitutions of the Church, which contribute to . . . discipline, or integrity, or peace.[2]

Calvin returns in this discussion to the two principles which he has already laid down in the chapters on "moral" Law. "Everything," he says, "pertaining to the perfect rule of a holy life, the Lord has comprehended in His law, so that there remains nothing for men to add to that summary." The Word of God is again the handbook of faith.[3] Over against this body of the divine Will is set the human sounding board of conscience. "Our consciences have todo, not with men, but with God alone."[4] By definition, conscience is that "apprehension of the judgment of God", that "witness which suffers them not to conceal their sins, but forces them as criminals before the tribunal of the Judge."[5] As works refer to our relationship with man, so conscience, the inward body of our motives, is the point where we meet with our God.[6] There is an obvious reference here to the Decalogue; and Calvin proceeds to criticise Rome precisely on her alleged emphasis upon the ceremonies which have been abrogated in Christ. Romanism is at best a "species of Judaism",[7] and as such not only returns to a state of pupillage /

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1 INST, 4: 10: 1.
2 Ibid.
3 INST. 4: 10: 7, 4: 10: 15-16.
4 INST. 4: 10: 5.
5 INST. 4: 10: 3.
6 INST. 4: 10: 4.
7 INST. 4: 10: 11 ff, 4: 10: 23 ff.

pupillage but brings in again the pharisaic pride of human obedience.[1] The true obedience, he argues, begins with the free consent of our conscience to God as the "sole legislator of His own worship."[2] So long as we retain this direct relationship of active personal faith we shall be able to judge correctly of particular and local laws. Laws are to be judged of by the end for which they have been made,[3] and all right laws lead either to the glory of God or to charity towards our fellowmen.[4] These are alone the inviolate principles. Variety of discipline may indeed be found amongst local churches without at all violating their claim to be expressions of the true Church,[5] but such variations are subject to the over-ruling principles of the divine Will.

The whole jurisdiction of the Church relates, therefore, to the discipline of manners.[6] Virtually this principle restricts the power of the Church to an administrative scope. The Word legislates, the Spirit executes, the Church administers. And in this sense, the Church is the local church, the pastor and those associated with him in spiritual government.[7] Their power is without civil implication; they merely decide that, on the premisses of faith, such an one cannot be allowed to associate in the sacraments and other benefits of the church. The social status of the person concerned is, of course, irrelevant to his being faithfully dealt with,[8] and further there is a progress of discipline from private admonition onwards.[9] Further distinctions in discipline also emerge. /

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1 INST. 4: 10: 15.
2 INST. 4: 10: 23.
3 INST. 4: 10: 22.
4 INST. 4: 10: 21.
5 INST. 4: 10: 32.
6 INST. 4: 11: 1.
7 Ibid.
8 INST. 4: 12: 7.
9 INST. 4: 12: 2 ff.

emerge. It is not, for example, merely a matter of punishment. Public fasting is an act of corporate discipline, a spiritual exercise. Moreover, the public ministry lies under a discipline of conduct which is peculiar to its calling.[1] "It is reasonable that the people should be ruled with a milder and less rigid discipline; and that the clergy should suffer heavier censure and exercise far less indulgence to themselves than to other persons.[2] Clergy, however, need not be celibate, for pastors are not priests. That is to say, the pastor does not stand, as the Levite might be said to have stood, as a type of Christ.[3] Essentially the pastor belongs to the "not-yet" of the whole Church here on earth, for, as Calvin says in his definition of the Church and sacraments, they belong to "our confinement in the prison of our flesh,"[4] that is to say, of God, but, in so far as we are involved, a ladder whose topmost rung we cannot presume to see.

The judicial power of the Church resides in the "assembly of the elders".[5] Calvin discusses at some length the history of lay assent, concluding that it is essential to matters of principle, though not to matters of routine. He stresses once again the local impact of the Church. It has no legitimate claims to empire. It is concerned with the life and manners of a limited number of persons who locally assemble for worship. The analogy of the Church Court is significant. In the Church it is what

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1 INST. 4: 12: 22 ff.
2 Ibid.
3 INST. 4: 12: 25.
4 INST. 4: 1: 1.
5 INST. 4: 12: 6.

a senate is in a city.[1] It deals with problems with which it is familiar, not with problems that concern alien circumstances. The shadow of Geneva rises up behind this argument. Here is the scope of the "Institutes", the possibility of knowing every individual in the quarter under administration, and the possibility of arguing out differences of opinion that might arise between church assemblies or even different cities. The question inevitably arises whether such a principle could be applied to larger social units. Could there be a Calvinist system for an empire, as there had been a Roman system? That question may be for the moment passed by.

Only in the last chapter of the whole work Calvin turns to the civil problem of laws. One always feels that Calvin is anxious to propitiate kings and magistrates. He had the strong motive power of contemporary Anabaptist anarchy and the imputation of that anarchy to himself. At the outset, therefore, he lays down the divine ordination of the state.[2] He is concerned even to dissociate himself from any particular kind of state. Personally he preferred "either aristocracy, or a mixture of aristocracy and democracy",[3] but the Church can subsist under any form of government. "The kingdom of Christ consists not in these things."[3] The only condition of a right magistracy is that it should be concerned for religion. "Civil government is designed, as long as we live in this /

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[1] Ibid,

[2] INST. 4: 20: 1.

[3] INST. 4: 20: 8.

[4] INST. 4: 20: 1, cf. 4: 20: 8.

this world, to cherish and support the external worship of God, to preserve the pure doctrine of religion, to defend the constitution of the Church, to regulate our lives in a manner requisite for the society of men, to form our manners to civil justice, to promote our concord with each other, and to establish general peace and tranquillity",[1] and consequently, a right magistracy and law will exist to perform these functions. It will be observed that Calvin has maintained the same distinction as he did in his description of the Church. It is a local matter, confined to our sojourn here on earth. Moreover, it concerns both religious and civil obedience, both justice and love. Finally the senate, like the Church assembly, represents the body politic in matters concerning other bodies. Calvin makes a strong defence of war on this ground.[2] The power of the sword is withdrawn from individual Christians; but "in this respect magistrates are not subject to the common law." They are bound, therefore, to punish malefactors and also to protect the Christian society "against hostile aggression".[3]

If the magistrate is a "speaking law", the law is a "silent magistrate".[4] The equation means more for Calvin than simply the mutual necessity of enforcement for law and principle for magisterial validity. In an argument whose process is difficult to follow he lays /

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1 INST. 4: 20: 2.
2 INST. 4: 20: 10 ff.
3 INST. 4: 20: 11.
4 INST. 4: 20: 14.

lays down the principle that the "common laws of nations" may represent a form of justice which the "polity of Moses" does not equal.[1] The Christian state does not require to replace its laws by the Mosaic polity. This polity, it appears, is to be identified with the judicial precepts of the Old Testament. In other words, Calvin wished to avoid the extravagances that appeared, for example, in the England of the Barebones rule. Geneva was not Israel although the mantle of Israel may have fallen upon her. However relevant the ceremonial and the law of Israel may have been to Israel, its relevance to Geneva was strictly through its subsumption in the moral Law. The "ceremonial" Law, therefore, was the religious pupillage of the Jews, and the judicial, "given to them as a political constitution, taught them certain rules of equity and justice."[2] The ceremonies, that is, corresponded to to the first table of the moral Law, the judicial law to the second. Therefore the abrogation of both these particular forms of piety and justice do not alter the basic principles themselves.[3] Finally, the conclusion can be extended to all nations. "All nations are left at liberty to enact such laws as they shall find to be respectively expedient for them; provided they be framed according to that perpetual rule of love, so that, though they vary in form, they /

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1 Ibid.

2 INST. 4: 20: 15.

3 Ibid.

they may have the same end."[1]

The importance of this principle can be over-rated. It is true that Calvin leaps forward to the identification of this "moral" Law with "natural law" and "that conscience which has been engraven by God on the minds of men."[2] "Equity, therefore, must alone be the scope, and rule, and end, of all laws," equity being natural and the same to all mankind.[3] But the principle of equity is still an "ought"; even Calvin has to consider the possibility of[4] "barbarous and savage laws which rewarded theft and permitted promiscuous concubinage" and so on. His answer is simple. These, he says, are not laws at all. In other words, the category of equity is itself definable - as he proceeds to define it - in terms of the Decalogue. And this order, first the Decalogue and then the principle of equity, is fundamental to his thinking. God is the Author of equity, and therefore we use the yardstick of God's Word to measure the equity of the common laws of nations. The fact that it was not necessary to revise the laws of 16th century Europe is due merely to the fact that they were based upon Christian equity, and to some extent cast their mantle of piety back upon Rome and Greece. Of necessity Calvin would have advocated /

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1 Ibid.

2 INST. 4: 20: 16.

3 Ibid.

4 INST. 4: 20: 15.

advocated the "polity of Moses" in its moral form, to such wild nations as those visited by St. Francis Saviour. Perhaps he might have repudiated their claim to humanity altogether; but certainly he could not have subscribed to any suggestion that their merely physical cohabitation or their totemistic associations could have constituted a "natural" law comparable with the revelation of God in Scripture. Calvin's was a narrower view of civilisation. Without dispagagement it could be called even "medieval", for to him the state was a good and useful ordinance of God just because man himself is a sinner, incapable of initiating any good thing.

(vi) Natural Law.

It will be sufficient at this point to mention only one point about natural law as it may be found in Calvin's thinking. Professor Lang points out that in the "Institutes" the conception is mentioned only three times.[1] In the first two[2] it is said of it that it affords only a very faint foretaste of what is really well pleasing to God, that is to say, it serves as an assertion of responsibility upon sinful man. In the third,[3] which has already been discussed in the immediately preceding paragraphs, he is saying that whatever application of responsibility individuals and nations may make, they are subject to the yardstick of the revealed /

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1 Article, "The Reformation and Natural Law" in the symposium "Calvin and the Reformation", pp. 69 ff.

2 INST. 2: 8: 1, 2: 2: 22.

3 INST. 4: 20: 4.

revealed principle of equity.

The point which has to be stressed, however, is that this principle of equity is a Christian principle. If Calvin says, of Greek or human legal thought, for example, that it exhibits the quality of equity to some degree, he does so because, as a matter of criticism based upon his revealed standards, it appears to be such. His immediate retort to the assumption by them of their equity would be the condemnation which he passes upon the Old Testament - that it tended to complacency. In other words, all mankind is guilty, and such as are not believers in Christ are yet in the mass of sinful corruption. Their plea of righteousness merely adds to their condemnation. The question therefore whether, from a Christian standpoint, these people have the capability of salvation, is sharply distinguished from the question with which natural law is so commonly equated, whether, in themselves, they may be said to become better by a process independent of the divine intervention of Jesus Christ.

The process of reducing the Decalogue to the principle of equity and then identifying equity with natural law does not, therefore, take Calvin outside the bounds of strictly Christian terminology. He is not at all unlike the early Fathers who refused the Old Testament as a heritage of the Jews on the ground that only Christians could rightly interpret it. He is concerned to formulate a Christian philosophy, and may be said to use terms with a strictly Christian reference. Even sin, for example, can be so used, since the unredeemed either refuses this description of his nature altogether, or else, while admitting /

admitting that something is wrong, does not admit that the wrongness is of the nature of evil in the Christian sense. Otherwise he would no longer be unredeemed.

It may be that at this point, when the unredeemed man is being redeemed, a gap is left in the interpretation. There must, of course, be something in the man that makes him a fit subject for redemption, such as a donkey, for example, is not. In other words, one moves from the revelation of Christ to the revelation of Creation. To do so, however, is to pass through a plane which is beyond human knowledge. It is to return to the essential enigma of Christian fact. It is true that Creation was and is good. It is equally true that man is a sinner. The two facts are at variance and must therefore be referred finally to the inscrutable Will of God. What is not inscrutable is the third fact that God has a Law which is of His own nature and by which He judges all things. We know this Law because He has revealed it both in Creation and in Scripture. And it is this Law, with the obedience that it demands, which is the main concern of the human soul.

# CHAPTER V

## Christian Citizenship

(i) The Uses of the Law

(ii) Justice

(iii) Personality

## CHAPTER V.

"For most of us", says T. S. Eliot, "there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightening,
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all but you are the music
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action."[1]

The subject matter of this chapter is the word "action". As in the lines quoted, it is a climax to prayer, observance, discipline and thought. The faith of the believer may be thought of as beginning with him as an individual: it is the confronting of God with me, and as such drives me to adoration and trust - to prayer, observance - but it requires also a reconstruction of my conduct and my philosophy - my discipline and thought. I cannot live to myself, and I cannot even live a life completely surrounded by those who agree with me.[2] The attempt has been made both in the medieval monastery and in the early Puritan States of New England. But compromise is inevitable. If the Church witness is to be more than a generation long, the believer must go out and evangelise. The Puritan /

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[1] "The Dry Salvages".

[2] Bohatec, op. cit., pp. 536 ff. points out that Calvin was aware of this restriction upon the church as a spiritual body.

Puritan Fathers were forced, therefore, to institute[1] what is quaintly known as "the Half-way Covenant" of 1662 in order to bring into fellowship the children and grandchildren of those who had originally gone out from home for conscience' sake. The measure stirred up controversy on the grounds of compromise but it illustrates the general principle which Brunner points out[2] - that "the individual human being does not enter into the sphere of social and natural relations as a free master of himself but, as a psycho-physical being, . . . is born into the life which is already present, and - as always - already 'ordered', and . . . grows . . . within this organism." Action - Christian ethics - is the impact of his faith upon his environment. And his environment, be it noted, includes not only the world of things but the world of human creatures, both those who are dependent on him, such as his children, and those who are less dependent on him, such as the stranger within his gate. The main issue of Christian citizenship is thus justice.[3]

Calvin treats the subject under the heading, "the three uses of the Law",[4] and incidentally, the Law is now pre-eminently the "moral" Law. The three uses are as follows, "First, by exhibiting the righteousness of God - the righteousness which alone is acceptable to Him - it admonishes every one of his own unrighteousness, certiorates /

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1 Byington, op. cit., pp. 306 ff.
2 Divine Imperative [E.T.] p. 140.
3 See Note 9 at end.
4 INST. 2: 7: 6 ff. Cf. Cheneviere, op. cit., pp. 84 ff.

certiorates, convicts, and finally condemns him".[1] Secondly, "the Law . . . by means of its fearful denunciations and the consequent dread of punishment, (curbs) those who, unless forced, have no regard for r ectitude and justice".[2] The third, and principal, use "has respect to believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already flourishes and reigns".[3] The form of the description is theological. There can be traced the rejection of work-righteousness, the primacy of faith, the emphasis of the revealed Will of God. But the terms "office" and "use"[4] as a description of the proposed manner of treating the subject indicate the practical categories into which faith was now to be fitted. Calvin here speaks less as a theologian than as a statesman and particularly as a pastor of the Church,[5] and the persons whom he brings before us are the sort that a pastor would have to deal with. There are the active believers, and these who, though on the fringes of the community were not yet embodied into it by their own confession of faith, and finally those who, whether as rebels against the domestic faith or "incomers" with the wrong theological training, explicitly deny the faith and spiritual authority recognised in the community /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 6.

2 INST. 2: 7: 10.

3 INST. 2: 7: 12.

4 "Officium usumque legis".

5 Chenevière says, "On a le droit de parler de la solitude de Calvin. Calvin n'est pas un maître comme les autres dont il est relativement facile de comprendre et de suivre l'enseignement . . . (il) n'est pas un maître, il n'est qu'un témoin, etc. op. cit., p. 14.

community.

"The Law"[1] Calvin says in discussing the first use and office, "is a kind of mirror" in which man is shown himself as he appears in the sight of God. However conceited he may have been in contemplation of his own virtue, he is now shown not only that the righteousness of God is infinite but is forced to the conclusion that, since there can be but one standard of righteousness, the human best does not qualify a finite being for salvation. Since, however, it is obvious also that unrighteousness must bring punishment, it follows that "all that remains for the Law is to arm the wrath of God for the destruction of the sinner";[2] "by itself it can do nothing but accuse, condemn and destroy him" although, even in destroying him, it shows the grace and mercy of God, Who "is never weary in doing good, and in loading us with new gifts". In short, this office of the Law is a sort of summary of the Christian enigma. God is at the same time a loving Father and a Destroyer of unrighteousness.

But the intellectual description of God does not exhaust His revelation. He is not passive, but active in the work of salvation, and the Law, therefore, by the very dispassionate majesty of its terms, reduces to despair, and therefore prepares for grace, those who seek God. The obvious question is, of course, how the assertion /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 7. "instar . . . speculi cuiusdam". Cf. Sermons (1562). C.R. LIV, 373. "La Loy nous doit estre un miroir pour contempler la povreté qui est en nous." 382 - "La Loy de Dieu est comme un miroir pour nous monstrer nos ordures etc."

2 Ibid. Compare. Sermon 15 (C.R. LIV, 407). "Il est vray que par empire il nous doit bien assuietis à soy, et il peut faire: mais il aime beaucoup mieux nous traitter par douceur paternelle." Cf. "Harmony". C.R. LII, DEUT. 10, 12-13. "Et certe non aliunde manat, quae Reo reverentia defertus, quam ex gustu paterni eius erga nos amoris . . . etc."

assertion of God's search for man can be related to that of His mere majesty. This is a question, however, which the believer does not ask for he is where he is because of an actual experience both of his own unrighteousness and of God's saving grace. There is something in the logic of conversion which is never expressed in argument, namely the certainty of the sinner's need for grace. Even the materialist has to explain this fact out of his system, and as Browning reminds us,[1] the moment of our clearest logical certainty is often succeeded by a plunge once again into the mystery of existence.

This first use and office of the Law, therefore, has the strength and the limitations of dogmatic assertion. It expresses the process of salvation, but for that very reason is sharply distinguished from the views of those who are not saved. The person who has not yet entered into the experience or who looks upon the universe from a different point of view will not accept it; and so it does not address such persons except by merely defining the experience; it is dogmatic, not apologetic. Indeed, Calvin does not enter into an apologetic for the faith in anything like the detail which has become common since the Liberal movement in theology. All that he has to say about sinful - that is unbelieving - man is that they will not always remain "puffed up with infatuated confidence in their own powers" but will sooner or later, beginning to "compare them with the requirements of the Law" feel "that they pant under the heavy load, then totter and stumble and finally fall and give way.[2] It is no refutation of this assertion to suggest that /

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1 Bishop Bloughram's apology.
2 INST. 2: 7: 6.

that there may be other ways of entering the Kingdom, or that the fact of disbelief can be construed as an admission of God's defeat by human freedom. The doctrine of election covers all mysteries and safeguards what is actually known of God's will. The believer may be assured that, even if the unbeliever's repentance is not obvious to human eyes, he still has the same standards of righteousness to face here or hereafter.[1] The fact of God's will is known by revelation, the fact of disobedience is only apparent. What God's answer to it in terms of salvation may be we cannot know; what we do know is that God's Will demands obedience, and that the end of the disobedient is punishment. "Assuredly", he says,[2] "if our whole will were formed and disposed to obedience, the mere knowledge of the Law would be sufficient for salvation; but since our carnal and corrupt nature is at enmity with the Divine Law, and is in no degree amended by its discipline, the consequence is, that the law which, if it had been properly attended to, would have given life, becomes the occasion of sin and death". From such a statement one can deduce both the doctrinal certainty of the believer and his attitude to the non-believer.

One may also deduce the expected process of salvation. The man who is[3] "forced to weigh his conduct in the balance of the Law" and /

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1 So Chenevière, op. cit. pp. 83 ff. points out Calvin's division of mankind into a spiritual and a political creature. (INST. 4:10:4.) As spiritual, he is ruled by the Decalogue, as political he is ruled by "offices of humanity and civility", The difference, however, lies not in the Law as a revelation of God, but in the difference of mankind into obedient and disobedient. For a further discussion on this distinction see Note 10 at end.

2 INST. 2: 7: 7.

3 INST. 2: 7: 6 " . . . ad legis trutinam examinare vitam suam cogitur . . . "

and "sees that he teems with innumerable vices of which he formerly seemed free" will soon reach the godly despair out of which Christ works renewal of life. "Despair" is not perhaps the exact word for the experience, for despair strictly applies only to the reprobate. The children of God, although they may reach a point where the "flesh is cast down"[1] pass through the experience "to be renewed in the inner man, and revived again" by the grace of Jesus Christ. The reprobate in their despair remain "obstinate".[2] Calvin here is touching upon two doctrines which have been commonly enough held and preached by sects which he himself would have abhorred. Both doctrines of assurance, whether assurance of salvation or assurance of damnation - the commission of the unforgivable sin - imply a knowledge of the divine mystery which Calvin denied to human intellect. Like George Borrow in his dealings with Peter, the Welsh preacher,[3] Calvin might have rejected the whole idea of assured reprobation as being as sentimental as the idea of assured salvation. At the same time it was necessary to give value to the work of grace and to prevent the escape of the reprobate into a false dualism of human standards. The reprobate is not permitted to go his way in ignorance of the divine value or even of the bliss which he would not enjoy. By the same Law which leads /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 9. "ut pont carnis deiectionem interiore homine renoventur ac reflorescant", i.e. children of God.

2 INST. 2: 7: 8 "In hunc certe (i.e. despair) modum illinc examinantur reprobi, sed ob animi obstinationem".

3 "Lavengro".

leads or lashes the redeemed upon their way of life the reprobate is faced with the gloomy logic of his inevitable damnation. He too is made sick with the knowledge of his human impotence, his consequent iniquity, and the inevitable curse that is attached to it.

The reasoning behind Calvin's argument is clear enough. One of the functions of the Law is to "stop the mouths"[1] of scoffers who might argue the possibility of ignorance of God's Will or deny God's justice. Calvin touches upon the possibilities in order to demonstrate that the Law of God is an absolute, as indeed all law must be, admitting of no exceptions to its decrees, but his interest clearly is that of a preacher rather than that of a lawyer. The point of his remarks is reached when he has convinced the congregation that, for example,[2] they would be justified in disciplining their children in order to bring them to a suitable state of docility, or that the clever scoffer is simply an irresponsible and unfeeling person bent on mischief.[3] Did we know the personality of men well enough we should see clearly what we know in part, namely that self-knowledge, sanity itself, presupposes the knowledge that God is righteous. If the term "conscience" has to be used - and Calvin uses it - then all men have a conscience, some faculty of their humanity /

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1 A quotation from ROMANS III, 19. INST. 2: 7: 8.

2 The example is quoted by Carew Hunt, op. cit., of a child who developed leanings towards the banished religion of Rome. Calvin's advice was summary. She should be whipped into obedience.

3 The character of the reformed and spiritually narrow Will Knaggs in Leo Walmsley's novel "Master Mariner" illustrates this attitude of Christian faith towards the "world".

humanity which can be intelligibly addressed by the Word of God, and which, if it does not make for salvation, at least makes damnation all the more terrible because of the Word having been inescapably heard.[1] Morally, mankind is a unity. It must, however, be said that Calvin's doctrine is, as Barth says, negative.[2] There is no attempt to build upon it a moral theory of "natural" virtues or even of natural "tendencies" to virtue. How far from the "noble savage" of the Rationalists is the casual dismissal by Calvin of those without the Law! Where the Word of grace has not been preached we can only suppose that sin "miserably destroys before the fatal sting is discerned".[3] One illustration of the negative but didactic interest in the unbeliever comes to mind.[4] A scoffer, lying sick of the plague, was seized by the devil, so his mother and a servant affirmed, carried over their heads despite their valiant efforts at a rescue, out of the door, across a broad road with a hedge and ditch on both sides, and finally disappeared into a vineyard on the far side. The body was never found. Most people in Geneva dismissed the story but Calvin insisted upon a public /

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1 This is the inevitable basis of Christian philosophy. E.g. A. E. Taylor, "a completely intelligible universe must also be a moral system" - "Christian hope of immortality", p. 48. So Dean Inge, "Confessio Fidei" in "Outspoken Essays" II (1922), "Ultimately, there can be only one true philosophy".

2 "Natural theology" pp. 105 ff.

3 INST. 2: 7: 6. ". . nisi per illam retegatur ex latebris suis, occultuis miseram hominem perdit quam id exitiale eius telum sentiatur." In the Sermons, Calvin refers to the Pagans as "les povre aveugles" (C.R. LIV 238). Of the Turks and Jews he says (ibid., 427) that though monotheistic and iconoclastic, they both stand condemned: the Turks "ne veulent pas recevoir nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ." The Jews "ont renoncé la Loy de Dieu quand ils ont reietté Jesus Christ qui est l'ame de la Loy."

4 Quoted by Dr. A. Mitchell Hunter, op. cit., pp. 288-9. Calvin was, in an age of superstition, notably free of the trait. In this instance his interest was not in the episode as such, but in its "catechetical" possibilities.

public enquiry and made it a subject for some energetic preaching. His interest clearly was to establish the fact of God's control of the reprobate, and by implication one may assume the existence of those whom He wished to impress. Would these persons perhaps be the younger members of the congregation not yet convicted of sin, those "sinners not yet regenerated"[1] whom he had faithfully been schooling in the Law in order to bring them to a knowledge of their sin and to a godly despair?

The second office of the Law envisages a class of person who require to be "curbed".[2] Into this discussion the word "force" significantly comes. Calvin the preacher is passing from exhortation to what Calvin the lawyer and statesman sees to be inevitable if the Christian community is to be preserved. It is of course true that the word does occur in the discussion of the first office. Calvin says of the man who "sees that he teems with innumerable vices" that he has reached this state of mind by having been "forced to weigh his conduct in the balance of the Law", under the preaching of John Calvin for example, or under the educative methods which Calvin had advocated to parents and teachers, perhaps even by the supernatural impact that one might expect upon the motives of the elect. But all such forces are considered "moral" as distinct from "physical". Whatever the outward conditions of the prodigal the final movement takes place when the prodigal himself /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 10." . . . omnibus tamen nondum regeneratis . . . "

2 INST. 2: 7: 10 "nisi coacti . . . coerceantur . . . "

himself "comes to himself", and as an act of his own personality - one need not say his "unaided" personality - turns from the evil that is not his true self. But Calvin in the second office is thinking of those who remain rebellious. They, he says,[1] are to be "curbed, not because their mind is inwardly moved and affected, but because, as if a bridle were laid upon them, they refrain their hands from external acts, and internally check the depravity which would otherwise petulantly burst forth". These persons are Calibans to their Prospero; their desires and intentions are in revolt; their essential personality is being deliberately thwarted, not even with the intention of moulding it to a better way but with an end in view which implies their destruction. In a modern phrase, they are to be morally "liquidated". The proposition is of course a statement of extreme possibilities, as one might argue the moral necessity of retributive punishment without ever actually giving up hope of its beneficial effects upon the guilty person, but it shows Calvin in a light one could scarcely call, in the modern sense, "democratic".

What is involved in his doctrine of "curbing"? Two points are quite clear; namely that the obedience to be extorted does not work for the subject's good - in other words, that the reprobate is to be made a means to the end of social security - and secondly that the obedience to be extorted is spiritual acquiescence and not merely outward conformity. In short, Calvin's God was a tyrant with all the /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 10 - " Coercentur autem, non quod interior eorum animus permoveatur, aut officiatur, sed quid, tanquam iniecto fraeno, manus al exteriore opere continent, et suam pravitatem intus cohibent, quam alioqui petulantur effusuri erant." In the Sermons there are also many references to "la pride".

the attributes of tyranny which have become so familiar to modern experience. Not, of course, that Calvin would have accepted modern totalitarianism; on the contrary Calvinism has been one of the forces of democratic determination against political imposition. Nor is the point of his difference from such imposition hard to discover; God was his Tyrant and none other.[1] All men, including Christians, were bound together by a common bond of sinful finitude, and therefore none, not even the king, was to be regarded as more than a mere mortal called by God to high things under Him. God is a Tyrant Whom one can trust to remain faithful to His declared policy. What this doctrine of "curbing" does reveal is Calvin's own sternness and his own certainty of God's Will. Farel's comparison of his colleague with Moses has been already mentioned. It is significant that Moses was the lawgiver of God's people. Like Moses too, in dealing with a motley social group Calvin left whatever hesitations he might have in his closet. Publicly he appeared certain of himself and incontrovertible by others. Neither his logic nor his courage could be attacked. In his dealings with Servetus, for example, he /

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[1] INST. 1 Chap. 18 is the strongest expression of this aspect of God's Sovereignty. It occurs frequently in the Sermons, e.g. "Il faut donc que Dieu marche devant; et puis après que les creatures suyvent, comme en ordre subalterne, ainsi, qu'on dit" [C.R. LIV, 316]. Hence His Will is free (ibid.,383) declared "par la bouche" of prophets (e.g. ibid., 394). Princes and other magistrates derive their authority from Him (e.g. ibid., 318). But His justice is dependent upon His goodness (ibid.,242) so that the sinfulness of man is ingratitude. This view of God's justice as deriving from His Being was maintained by scholastic Calvinists. [See Heppe "Reformed Dogmatics" (E.T. 1950, p. 292).

he admittedly[1] pressed for the extreme force of the law both logically on the ground that heresy is treason to a Christian society and politically on the ground that Servetus had been made the cover of a subversive movement. But Calvin's opposition to Servetus did not make him pitiless. Both on this and on other occasions[2] he is found pleading with the Council to mitigate the preliminaries of execution.

The question one can only ask of Calvin, therefore, is the same that one must ask of every legislator, not whether external force will convert the soul but whether force in any particular instance is the only remedy. What Trevelyan says in connection with English history Calvin knew in Geneva, namely that the only stable government is government by consent and that every act of dissent is a point of weakness.[3] Like war on the international scale, mere force settles nothing at all except the question whose will is to be dominant. Even the most totalitarian regimes at least pretend to represent some social group if by no other means than as the embodiment of the group's soul in the person of the governor, and on the other hand, even the most democratic regimes have to put a limit to the right of /

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1 Calvin, in his "Declaration" seems to deny that he wanted the death of Servetus, but James Gruet had been executed in 1547 for blasphemy, and Rilliet suggests that Calvin had a share, at least by implication, in the matter. Probably Calvin's disclaimer was of any personal interest in Servetus' death; for the case of Servetus involved the personal standing of Calvin in Geneva. Rilliet says (p. 201) Servetus "was a tool which the leaders (of the anti-Calvin faction) wished to employ for their own ends."

2 Annales, March 9th, 1545. C.R. XLIX, 348.

3 History of England.

of dissent, however sincere that dissent may be. This is not the place to embark upon the problem of toleration, but at least it can be said that Calvin faced the problem in a way that the Western world has not been forced to face it till the most recent years. Living in Geneva, he saw that every act of dissent was an act in favour of the enemies and rivals who surrounded the city. There was no solution in the export of the undesirable to some place of refuge where the "poor heathen" lacked the political standing to object.[1] As with the conscientious objector in a total war the answer had to be found within the framework of his own social system.

If one cares therefore to press the comparison, Calvin can be stood in the same pillory as the Spanish Inquisition, for he too was ready to use force as an educative measure and as a means of preserving the purity of society. No doubt there have been in Calvinist history many futile tragedies of revolt against tyranny, and no doubt the educational methods which Calvin advocated had both the successes and the failures which the famous Keate enjoyed with Gladstone[2] and perpetrated against Shelley[3] at Eton. There is indeed only one just basis for the use of force against another person, namely the assumption that one is absolutely right and that one has the authority to mould the personality concerned. Hence the most easily defended use /

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1 Thackeray mentions the practice in "The Virginians". The reaction today is of course that nationality is regarded by native peoples as an end worth purchasing by any renunciation of Western science and order.

2 Morley "Life of Gladstone" I, 25 ff.

3 Cf. Article on Shelley in "National Dictionary of Biography".

use of force is educational. Calvin enlarges upon this justification in an interpretation of I TIM. i, 9 - 10 and GAL. iii, 24. Force is a form of tuition[1] "not without its use, even to the children of God, who previous to their effectual calling, being destitute of the Spirit of holiness, freely indulge in the lusts of the flesh. When, by the fear of Divine vengeance, they are deterred from not being subdued in mind, they profit little at present, still they are in some measure trained to bear the yoke of righteousness, so that when they are called, they are not mere novices studying a discipline of which they have no knowledge." The assumptions behind this statement are, firstly, concerning the nature of the child, that[2] "they have need of a bridle from giving full scope to their passions and thereby losing all desire after righteousness" - the method of bending the twig the way it is to grow rather than the modern idea of developing what is in the child himself - and secondly, the statement of one's authority;[3] "those whom (God) has destined to the inheritance of His Kingdom, if he does not immediately regenerate, he through the works of the law, preserves in fear, against the time of his visitation, not indeed that chaste fear which his children ought to have, but a fear useful to the extent of instructing them in true piety according to their capacity."

The third, and as Calvin says, the "principal" use of the Law, takes us safely back into the heart of the Christian community amongst those /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 10 -11.
2 INST. 2: 7: 11 " . . . opus habent fraeno quo retineantur . . . "
3 Ibid.

those who do not question the authority of God's Law and God's promises. Such persons can still benefit from the Law in two ways.[1] "It is the best instrument for enabling them daily to learn with greater truth and certainty what that will of the Lord is which they aspire to follow", and it serves, too, "to confirm them in this knowledge". "Let none of us deem ourselves exempt from this necessity", he adds, "for none of us have as yet attained to such a degree of wisdom, as that they may not, by the daily instruction of the Law, advance to a purer knowledge of the Divine will". In this passage Calvin is returning to a doctrine which he has already stated, that perfectibility is an impossible attainment while we are in the flesh. Human nature is such that it requires "a whip to the flesh, urging it on as men do a lazy sluggish ass".[2] "Even in the case of a spiritual man," he goes on, "inasmuch as he is still burdened with the weight of the flesh, the Law is a constant stimulus, pricking him forward when he would indulge in sloth." "The recesses in which concupiscence lies hid are so deep and tortuous that they easily elude our view" and thus even the man in Christ cannot assume from his share in the sacrament that he is assured of salvation. He walks by faith in the promise of God. The Law is the dominating fact of Christian life, not only as a means of fortifying the Christian against the sneers of the unbeliever but as a means of keeping himself right. The Law "binds their (the reprobate) consciences with a curse" but in /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 12.

2 "Huic carni lex flagrum est, quo instar inertis tardique asini ad opus urgeatur". (a misreading for "urgeantur")

in regard to believers, it "has the force of exhortation".[1] "Our whole life is a race, and after we have finished our course, the Lord will enable us to reach that goal to which, at present, we can only aspire in wish".[2]

(ii) Justice.

An obvious question must be postponed to the next chapter: what, namely, is the content of this daily guidance that the Christian by faith is to seek; what, for example, about marriage, business, war, and so on. It will be submitted that Calvin derives through the Decalogue a fair outline or pattern of social law, covering personal and property rights and duties and also that interior goodwill without which no social fabric can hold together. At the moment the issue is more general. A state cannot be self-sufficient. However absolute its origin, however close the mutual trust of its citizens, there are points at which it must touch the external world. Indications of this necessity have already appeared. Calvin has laid down the principle of total depravity. He has emphasised that total depravity still implies responsibility and therefore significance of action even in those outside Christian faith. But nowhere did he touch the issue so closely as in his discussion of the uses of the Law /

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1 INST. 2: 7: 14 - "Nunc ergo, quoniam vim exhortationis erga fideles habet lex, non quae eorum conscientias maleductione liget . . . "

2 INST. 2: 7: 13.

Law where he committed himself to the view that the reprobate must be used as means to the end of divine glory. This is a question of justice.

Two kinds of criticism can be offered against Calvin's idea of justice. The first is quite sentimental and demands no great effort for its demolition. It centres upon the unfortunate Servetus who is held up as a martyr to free opinion. Such criticism comes strangely from the pew of a Roman Catholic, but Dr. Piette[1] denounces Calvin and Farel's credal text in sweeping terms. "It was their purpose," he says, "to subject the state to the Church . . . to refuse the Lord's Supper, and exile and excommunicate from the city everyone who refused to swear to the new confession of faith." "Under threat of banishment they were forced to give their individual acceptance of it in the presence of the class-leader(!) of their quarter . . . Calvin gave orders that those excommunicated by their pastors should be driven from the city." There are more errors there than the solecism of the class-leaders.[2] Calvin, of course, never "gave orders" to the Council. Very often he had to stomach orders from them.[3] There is, however /

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[1] Op. cit., 59.

[2] The "class leader" was probably one of the persons appointed under the Articles of January 1537 (which had been called for by the Council in May 1536, i.e. before Calvin's arrival). These persons were to be "divided and distributed in all the quarters of the city", and to have an eye to the life and conduct of each one. (See also "Annales" C.R. XLIV, 211). Calvin, says Walker, op. cit., "did not need to say what would be done with recusants." "The Genevan authorities had already taken the position, in the month of Calvin's arrival, and without influence from him, that they must leave the city". Jean Bolard was thus banished, July 24th, 1536.

[3] Reyburn, op. cit., gives examples. See references elsewhere.

however, enough truth in the assertion to merit investigation. Dr. Piette quotes Goyau[1] for the following facts. Between 1542 and 1546 there were 56 sentences of death, 37 of which were between 17th February and 15th May, 1545; and during these same years 76 persons were banished the state. It is not altogether clear whether all of these sentences were specifically for religious misdemeanour, but Dr. Hunter[2] mentions that between 1558 and 1559 414 trials took place for such offences as laughing at Calvin while he was preaching. To be more explicit, there is an entry in city annals that all strangers were to be warned that attendance at church was a condition of their continued sojourn.[3] But however harrowing these figures may be, however pathetic the trial of Servetus may be painted, one must remember some other facts in the case. No Roman Catholic has the right to complain of Calvin's persecution. What he did - granting that it be persecution - is but a pale shadow of the Inquisition's aim and its achievement. Moreover the very dates that Dr. Piette quotes illustrates the methods of Roman Catholic France.[4] In May, 1545, a punitive expedition was sent into Provence to destroy indiscriminately. The details of the horror are such as even the Old Testament abhors. Calvin never sought his ends by indiscriminate destruction. His victims /

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1 "Une Ville Eglise, Genève, 1535-1907" [1919] I.4 - 5.

2 Op. cit., p. 221 (note) - The "Annales" (C.R. XVIX, 220) refer to persons "se mocans des prescheurs" in taverns.

3 C.R. XLIX, 240.

4 C.R. XLIX, 352-3. Farel and Calvin were deputed to raise a fund for the assistance of the refugees. They canvassed Bern, Basel, Zurich, Schaffhausen and Strasburg, Walker, op. cit., pp. 382 ff.

victims were tried according to laws which were not only consistent with a general policy in Church and State, but which were, by implication, known and accepted beforehand by the victims themselves. Even Servetus knew what to expect, not only in Geneva but elsewhere, if he set foot within its bounds.[1] A "monument expiatoire" has been erected in Geneva to Servetus, while Calvin is commemorated only by inclusion in a group and by a meagre stone on a hypothetical grave. There is little evidence in Roman Catholic circles of memorials to those who have been martyred by the Church.

Another side of the Servetus affair is its wider implications in Genevan politics. In general, the city lay under the continent-wide fear of the Turk, the plague and the spiritual infection of false religions. "The threat of a Turkish invasion were always before their eyes".[2] The defence of Vienna has turned the direct threat in 1529, but the Turk was not defeated, and in 1541 captured Buda. Fear of the plague was equally strong, and led to strange pietism[3] and strange cruelty. In Geneva, in the period mentioned by Goyau, some at least of the death sentences were "pour avoyer faict seyrement de server la peste".[4] The accused, though women, were sentenced as follows: "elles auront les mains coupées au Molard, et le corps brûlé à la potence de Plain palais." Calvin pleaded on this occasion for at least a speedier despatch of the execution. About the /

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1 Other states concurred in his execution.

2 Lindsay, op. cit., I, 129.

3 Ibid., pp. 128 ff. Rilliet, op. cit., 38 ff. also gives some details of the horror of the plague. He mentions the hysterical lawlessness which led to these deliberate attempts to spread the disease.

4 C.R. XLIX, 349 - March 21st 1545. The Molard was a public square in Geneva, the scene, incidentally, of Froment's earliest sermons in the town, January 1st 1533. Walker, op. cit., 170.

the same time[1] he is found making a general request "pour les povres que sont condampnes a mort, mesures pour ces empoysonneurs, c'est que lon advise de non fere languyr". Internally, Geneva had an understandable fear of dissent. The so-called "Libertines" who had embraced the cause of the Reformation with eagerness but with no love for the doctrines it asserted"[2] were in Calvin's eyes at least, a menace to the very liberty for which they had fought. Probably he was right. The Italy to which they looked for inspiration did not survive the fires of spiritual persecution. The Netherlands did. Reform required utter belief in the divine significance of the movement. Further there were the crypto-Romanists and a mass of superstitious[3] ignorance which could be moulded by any force in power. Calvin was stern-faced against what we might dismiss as slight offence. The reason is not simply a matter of his personality: nor is it his legal mind insisting on the principle that "in enacting laws, the first thing to be guarded against is, their being forthwith abrogated by contempt".[4] It is true that he sought a reconstruction of society "on the basis of a morality enforced by all the sanctions of a religion whose word was law and whose assertions were truth";[5] it is equally true that he realised the danger of permitting a Romanism which might open the gates to French treachery or French power.

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1 Ibid., 348. March 9th 1545.
2 Hunter, op. cit., 218 ff.
3 E.g. on baptismal names, burial, etc. See "Ordonnances" C.R.XXXVIII a 49 ff.
4 INST., 2: 8: 13
5 Hunter, op. cit., 219-20.

One has only to compare the Gruet,Berthelier or Servetus affairs in Geneva with the trials and executions of alleged traitors in England[1] under Elizabeth to perceive the uncertainties which lurked behind the newly won independence of the small states of Europe. In short, Servetus represented to Calvin the whole opposition, that is to say, the spiritual laxity, which threatened the state as he perceived it.[2]

As has been said, however, the Servetus affair turns very largely upon the sentiment that "spreads amongst large minded men uninfluenced by the responsibilities of leadership and either less apprehensive of the contagion of heresy or more trustful of the deep rootedness of the general faith."[3]

Dr. Brunner raises a much more fundamental issue in his "Justice and the Social Order." In earlier works[4] he had already pointed out the fact that the individual human being does not enter into the sphere of social and natural relations as a free master of himself, but is born into a life which is already present, and - as always - already "ordered". The early Fathers were influenced in their views by the clearcut historical situation in which they professed their faith./

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1 E.g. the Portuguese Lopez - see Lytton Strachey's "Elizabeth and Essex".

2 This remark ignores the fact that Calvin was not in a position to condemn, and did not have a share in the actual condemnation of Servetus. It merely accepts the fact that Calvin pressed for the extreme penalty.

3 Hunter, op. cit., pp. 248. ff.

4 "Divine Imperative". E. T. quoted above p. 140. The opening paragraph of "The Mediator" makes a similar point viz. it is the believer, not his environment, who is primarily changed in conversion.

faith. The "world" as they knew it was obviously "fallen"; all therefore that could be deduced from its "order" was the "regulative principle" "that in the sinful world, so far as possible the absolute Law of Nature must be carried out".[1] They accepted therefore the fact that God intends His people to be a society, although not necessarily the kind of society that actually comes into existence by the hands and ideas of sinful and unregenerate men.[2] The point of Roman Catholic error, Brunner goes on, is that, on the authority of the Church's unique calling, it claims to interpret the "transformation formula" into actual laws, which thus acquire the absolute authority of God. What the Reformers rejected was not the idea of a Law of Nature in the absolute sense, but the Roman claim to be the guardian of the law in actuality.

Brunner denies, however, what seems to be the mainstay of the Calvinistic position. Calvin set up as the Protestant transformation formula the Decalogue: that is to say, the essence of Scriptural precept maintained as a living force in the Christian Church by the Holy Spirit. This was not perhaps the Decalogue which scholars say was the "real" Decalogue of Moses.[3] Let it be admitted even /

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1 "Divine Imperative", 628 ff.

2 Cf. Gierke, op. cit., 38. "Lordship made its appearance as a consequence of the Fall of man." Other "relative" standards were accepted on the same assumption, notably the practice of slavery - Troeltsch I, 133 ff. Barth brings out this point also in his "Rechtfertigung und Recht". See also Brunner "children of light and children of darkness" (1945) pp. 66 ff. Hence, he points out, the greater ease in accommodating the idea of private property.

3 E.g. Buber, "Moses" refers to the number of the commandments as being equal to the number of fingers on Moses' hands. From a completely different viewpoint Calvin uses the same analogy - C.R. LIV, 385. The simplicity of the Ten Words is due to the Divine care for us: as the use of two tables is likewise to impress us that God desires two directions of our obedience - to God and to man - which are basically one. (ibid., 300).

even that it is essentially a "Christianised" Decalogue; for the same epithet could be used of Scripture as a whole. But Brunner objects to the use of the Decalogue on deeper grounds. The answer to the moral question, "What does God command?" cannot, he says, be answered abstractly, apart, that is, from a concrete human situation.[1] There is an "immediacy" of reaction between man acting under God and his neighbour man. Only a "legalistic conception of the good"[2] attempts to answer the question of God's Will outside the actual contact of personalities: and by "legalistic" Brunner implies the hateful superiority of considering one's fellow man as a "case". Therefore, he concludes, while the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount may be used as "God-given paradigms of love",[3] they must be distinguished from the divine inspiration to action as mere grammar is distinguished from the living contact of speech.

In passing one remarks that grammar, if not itself speech, is derived from speech. The Decalogue may thus still be the essence of the divine speech to Israel. The question remains whether the divine speech in 16th century Geneva or 20th century Zurich is saying anything essentially different. Is it true that the Christian can in the Spirit, write an endless series of Decalogues as Paul in the Spirit wrote a number of epistles?[4] Or is it true that the infinity of applications of Christian Charity as of Christian doctrine are simply variations upon a theme uttered from the foundations of God's world? It is the latter /

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1 "God and Man" (E.T. 1936) 95 ff. Barth has a similar idea of the Church as an "Ereignis" of the Christian era.
2 "Divine Imperative", 122.
3 Ibid., 135 ff.
4 So Luther, quoted by Brunner, op. cit., p. 148.

latter position which Brunner expresses in "Justice and the Social Order". "Obviously", he says,[1] "there is a great deal written in the Old Testament as divine law which no Christian can regard as binding upon himself." And again, the commandments cannot be made "the basis of a scientific doctrine of justice" since they cannot be used as a satisfactory appeal for any teaching about, for example, income tax, abortion, or war. No doubt, he admits, the exegete may claim to deduce such teaching, but he can produce a workable doctrine only by surreptitiously introducing into the Decalogue other principles such as that of the New Testament or that of natural law.

Calvin, of course, does deal with the equivalent of income tax, tithe, with abortion, and with war.[2] Does he introduce external factors of nature, such as Luther and particularly Melancthon have been criticised for doing?[3] The suggestion that the introduction of the New Testament principle is not relevant is itself irrelevant. Since Christ was in the Law it follows that equity is a form of charity. But Brunner claims further that not only Luther but Calvin too in his doctrine of conscience, was appealing to a form of natural law. The moral law, he concludes, is "nothing but a testimony to natural law of God and the law which God has written in men's conscience."[4] Calvin, in short, was one of these exegetes who "regarded the legal sysem of the Old Testament as a model" but surreptitiously rested upon the law of nature for his authority.

This criticism does less than justice to Calvin. There is no reason so to divide the law of nature from the law of God's own revelation /

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1 pp. 111 ff.

2 See Chapter VI following

3 See Chapter II.

4 Op. cit., 242 ff.

revelation.[1] Brunner seems to be doing precisely what Calvin refused to do, that is, making a gift of Christian categories to unbelievers. The equation of the law of nature with the divine act of creation and redemption is a Christian's view of nature, not a rationalist's. The rationalist begins from his own thought and may eventually equate his idea of law with that of God. The Christian argues from precisely the opposite point. Moreoever, the rationalist in a final issue appeals to his own authority; and it was for this reason that even Zwingli, for all his Scripturalism, has been criticised in these pages.[2] But the whole trend of Calvin's thought is connected tothe revealed will of God for Church, individual and state, by a thousand bonds. This may be a legalistic view but it cannot be dismissed as sentimental inconsistency. Calvin's 'naturalis aequitas' was no hurried camouflage for mere force, but the will of God as revealed in Scripture and as tested by Christian faith in a variety of contacts with the circumstances of the world.

One may sympathise with Brunner's main plea. There is necessary in European thought a revival of "a sense of right and wrong",[3] an acceptance of divine law with the emphasis upon "divine". Moral values have sunk to a merely relative level.[4] Law is above private opinion and above the expedience of the State. Law refers to the eternal order of things. But the eternal order does not compress itself into any one event of revelation, even, apparently, that /

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[1] See Note 11 at end.
[2] Chapter II above.
[3] Op. cit., p. 14.
[4] Ibid., pp. 238 ff.

that of Scripture. Thus Christians, while they revere Scripture and make catechetical use of Scriptural law, cannot march "under the banner of truth to Scripture in the literal sense 'as it is written'".[1] There must always be the mystical factor of Spiritual immediacy. There can be no question that Brunner is here emphasising an aspect of the Reformation which was perhaps toned down in the 16th century. The idea of "immediacy" was too near that of Anabaptist enthusiasm, and, as has been learned from Dr. Niebuhr,[2] Calvin restricted the action of the Spirit to the assembly rather than to the individual. The result of this restriction has been, Brunner says, in practice, an over-emphasis upon the mere written Word. It was the barrenness of this literalism that prevented Christian faith from controlling 18th century "Reason", which thus became divorced from Christian faith. Now the action of Reason upon the traditional doctrine of Christian justice - a blend, Brunner says,[3] of the Aristotelian φύσει δίκαιον and prophetic justice, producing a peculiar doctrine of divine justice as eternal, supernatural and absolutely valid - was to reduce the divine law of nature to a subjective law of human reason. This view was reduced to a merely self consistent body of law lacking any internal reference to eternal authority, and has been finally swallowed up by the totalitarian state which arrogantly appropriates to itself that authority.

Not only Brunner, but Barth is aware of this unrighteous claim to authority. /

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1 Op. cit., p. 114.
2 See above p.
3 Op. cit., pp. 14-15.

authority. In his tract on baptism[1] he emphasises the need for individual acceptance of faith precisely because, as he says in his preface, he had seen the attempt of the State to dominate the courts of the church through the pseudo-democratic methods of church elections. Official membership of a church through infant baptism is not, he concludes, necessarily identifiable with spiritual membership with Christ. But, as he argues in his tract, "Nein" it is not necessary to repudiate Scripture,[2] and particularly is it dangerous to introduce a non Scriptural doctrine of nature, in order to achieve the force of immediate conviction. If necessary the Christian can repudiate contemporary social systems and simply proclaim a "thus saith the Lord". The Spirit bloweth where it listeth. If there are now no powers that be which are in accordance with the divine Will then the Word will no doubt fall by divine grace upon individual hearts and out of their conviction will denounce the present state of affairs and perhaps finally reform them to a better mould. But there must be a "thus saith the Lord".

These last sentences mark the separation between the 16th and the 20th centuries in the European spirit. One of Brunner's main contentions is that we must do away with the idea of a "relative law of nature" and base our moral categories upon an absolute law of being. The relative law, he says, is not a law at all but only a "regulative /

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1 "Die Kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe", (1943) translated by E. A. Payne. The preface is not included in the English translation which is made from the second edition of Barth's pamphlet.

2 E.g. his remarks upon Brunner's apparent appeal to authority beyond Scripture. "Natural Theology" pp. 110 ff.

"regulative principle"[1] indicating perhaps the existence of an Absolute Law, a sort of Kantian category indicating an unknown thing-in-itself. In medieval society it was perhaps a relevant factor, since the Church had captured the State and made it an expression of itself. Calvin himself was a medievalist in the sense that he too accepted the state not only as a category but as an actuality. That is to say, Calvin believed in Christendom and therefore accepted many of the conventions of Christendom, for example, his peculiar doctrine of non-resistance to rulers.[2] Brunner's view is that all such conventions are now vitiated. Christendom is no longer a fact but merely a sentiment. The true Christian now is where the true Christian was in third century Rome. He must evolve a new Christendom.

It is not within the scope of this study to say how or even whether, this reconstruction can be carried out. One simply recalls the historical fact that Calvinism did effect a reconstruction of manners in Europe[3] which remained to the end of the 19th century at least.[4] One also recalls the method by which it was done. Entry into /

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1 "Justice and the Social Order", 92: 243.

2 This question receives further comment below in Chapter VII. Walker comments, op. cit., 418 "He was far too polite a man to suggest that a Henry II or a Catherine de Medici were of the reprobate"

3 Trevelyan describes it for England in his "English Social History". Compare Grahame, "Social Life in Scotland in the 18th century".

4 Examples could be culled from Victorian literature. For example Trollope's novel, "The Vicar of Bullhampton" was regarded as sensational at the time of its publication. He had in mind the lot of "fallen women", and expresses the current attitude in the comment of his heroine's relatives that "that kind are better dead". Reformation society sought capital punishment for adultery. The 20th century attitude may be compared.

into the Calvinist Church was voluntary in the sense that each member professed to have been called as an individual. But as a member of that body he was aware of sharing in a divine covenant.[1] This idea of covenant gained political expression in the Scottish Solemn League and Covenant which stated the logical conclusion of a Calvinist state, namely the imposition of the truth upon every contract. Whatever Calvin may have professed, therefore, of respect for established order, the application of his principles was derived from an absolute ideal of conduct, both private and public, which rested upon the authority of God Himself. Calvin's justice claimed to be the application of truth to human affairs, the expression not only of an absolute revelation in Scripture, but the expression also of the Covenant which God made and continued to make with those who committed themselves to His obedience. The Scots, for example, marched to the assistance of anti-Laudian England under a solemn covenant[2] rather as Joshua marched over Jordan with the Ark of the Covenant borne on ahead as a sign that God was with His people. In a short but important section[3] Cheneviere shows how much of this idea was in Calvin's interpretation of international law. Here if anywhere would one expect to find some concession to the idea of a "jus gentium". Calvin however apparently /

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[1] This is brought out even in his doctrine of baptism. It is particularly forceful in his teaching about the use of the Law. It was not the Church as an institution but the faith implied by membership of the Church, that made for salvation.

[2] Trevelyan remarks, "History of England" 399, that Scotland at the time of the Covenant "had not been so moved since the days of Wallace and Bruce."

[3] Op. cit., pp. 107-8.

apparently made none. His conception of general grace was wide enough to cover such moral facts as human responsibility and the existence of the state. God willed these facts as He willed the rain - for the just and the unjust alike. In that sense His own people could be said to share in His common as well as His particular grace; or alternatively, could be said to disobey even the law of nature. In one example,[1] however, he shows how, in a point of disagreement, it was the Israelite and not the natural law that is God's Will. That is to say, in this instance, it was the Israelite law alone that represented the Will of God, they being in covenant with Him.

Interpreted in international terms, this view implies the logic that drove the Scots over the border to impose Presbyterian truth upon Anglican England. Barth said something similar in his "Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland". The justification of the Allies was not to be adequately found in motives that a Hindu or an atheist could share. It must be found in the Cross of Jesus Christ alone.

(iii) Personality

Something has already been said[2] of the two facets of personality - conscience and concupiscence - which Calvin finds in human personality. /

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1 C.R. XXXVIIIa pp. 235 ff.

2 In chapter II section (iii) and chapter IV section (iv)

personality. Responsibility, he contends, is the inescapable burden of humanity. Nor is he particularly interested to explain this statement apologetically. It is a mere fact of experience, like a sense perception. In short, the elucidation of personality is of less practical interest than its empirical existence. But the part which the idea, as an idea, played in European thought cannot simply be overlooked. Even in the hypothetically "natural" society of the dim Homeric clans, where the individual was not an individual, as we use the term, the clan itself had distinguishing marks: had, in short, a persona; and every individual member represented, and was represented by, it. The idea of representation remained in Roman law and was still a predominating factor in medieval Europe. The Church itself was legally a persona.[1]

The new emphasis of Protestantism is that of the personality of the individual. His salvation is by faith alone, unmediated by any human priest; and the means of his salvation, the divine Word, rests upon his own contact with his Creator. There is thus not only a question of responsibility but also a question of reason. The term conscience can cover both factors. "The very things contained in the two tables (of the Law) are, in a manner, dictated to us by that internal law, which . . . is in a manner written and stamped on every heart".[2] It will be noticed that Calvin does not limit his "natural" law to the second table, as Livingstone is quoted /

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1 Troeltsch, op. cit., I, pp. 97-8.

2 INST. 2: 8: 1. "Porro haec ipsa . . . quodammodo nobis dictat lex illa interior, quam omnium cordibus inscriptam et quasi impressam superius dictum est."

quoted as doing.[1] He assumes that the persons whom he is to judge are aware of the Will of God in all its aspects. He therefore is bound to judge of recalcitrance as either madness or deliberate opposition; and the proper action in each case is forcible restraint. There could be no other judgment; for Calvin ignores the modern idea of toleration which accepts the "reasonable" view that individuals may regard as 'good' things which are quite different from each other. Conscience, that is, for Calvin, is not only a goad, an affection of the will, but also a sort of blue print of reality, an instrument of the intellect. On the issue whether man can perceive reality he admits that astronomy, for example, is "real" knowledge while astrology is not.[2] And this faculty is not a special gift of grace to be obtained only through believing faith. He argues strongly against those who say that the Fall has reduced human nature to the animal level. Astronomy is "a sure indication of the agency of God in man".

The two ideas of conscience, however, cannot be rigidly separated. If conscience can be described as "un simple organe de connaissance expérimentale du monde extérieure" it is always primarily "un organe exprimant une règle morale".[3] Conscience, Calvin says, by distinguishing between good and evil, responds to the judgment /

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1 Micklem, op. cit., 56-7.

2 INST. 1: 5: 1 ff. Not only astronomy but also medical and physical science, and the special activities of His Providence (1: 5: 7 ff). These proofs would be self evident but for the "sloth and ingratitude" ("ignaviae et ingratitudinis") of human nature, to which witness is borne by conscience (1: 5: 15)

3 Cheneviere, op. cit., p. 46.

judgment of God is an undoubted sign of an immortal spirit.[1] But the conclusion is always negative. He did say "there is no doubt that certain notions of right and justice are innate in the human mind, and that a light of justice shines in them" but the sort of innate religion he means is basically "an irreligious affectation . . . (which) betrays itself in every age and is still doing so, men always longing to devise some method of procuring righteousness without any sanction from the Word of God".[2] Even man's supernatural gifts - "faith and righteousness" - as well as his natural gifts - soundness of mind and integrity of heart - "were corrupted by sin".[3] Man is immured in the darkness of error, (and) is scarcely able, by means of that natural law" - conscience - "to form any tolerable idea of the worship which is acceptable to God . . . Therefore, as a necessary remedy, both for our dullness and our contumacy, the Lord has given us His written law which . . . removes the obscurity of the law of nature, and also makes a more lively and permanent impression upon our minds.[4] Sin, he repeats, is not the result of ignorance but of "passion", "arrogance", "ambition", "self-love", "lethargy", "lust", "depravity", "pride", in a word, of "concupiscence".[5] Concupiscence is not simply /

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1 INST. 1. cap. 3.

2 INST. 2: 8: 5. So in the Sermons (C.R. LIV 297-8) he says that morally the revelation of God in the Law presents an impossible ideal for man. The Law is impossible, but relevant.

3 Cheneviere, op. cit., 20 ff.

4 INST. 2: 8: 1.

5 "libido", "arrogantia", "ambitia", "sui amore", "torpor", "cupiditas", "superbia".
C.R. LIV, 310 " . . . Nous savons que les hommes, combiens qu'ils appetent d'estre veus subtils at eigus, ne laissent pas de se couvoir du bouclier d'ignorance".

simply the "flesh" in the literal sense, to be purified by ascetic practice. As for Paul, it is for Calvin always a spiritual experience, even if that interpretation precludes any rational explanation of its origin. Just as Paul rested in an irrational conclusion that there are two laws at work in his members - the empirical fact of sin and an equally irrational ideal of righteousness - so Calvin also refuses to proceed beyond what he calls "experience" and the Word of God. With Barth he would say that if there is indeed such a thing as "Wort-mächtigkeit" in human nature, it does not lead to "Offenbarungs-mächtigkeit", but only to condemnation, for behind "Wort-mächtigkeit" is the motivating principle of "concupiscence".[1] Intelligence, that is, like instinct, is neutral, a mere tool which is manipulated by an inner principle of the will which in turn is divided between the desire of concupiscence and the dictates of conscience. Like parallel lines the principles of human nature recede into an infinite disparity, and one is left with a simple empirical statement of two facts.[2] The conclusion would be absurd if it were not the conclusion that must always be reached, whatever the starting-point. So long as justice is both a principle of right and a personal fact of responsibility, and so long as there remains the human fact of disobedience, no system, whether it makes optimistic or pessimistic observations about human nature, will achieve anything more than an approximate intellectual balance of the /

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1 See "Nein". "Natural Theology", 107 ff.

2 In the Sermons he suggests that Satan is a motivating force of evil in us, as if Satan, in combating God, makes the human soul his battlefield. This is Milton's argument in "Paradise Lost". For Calvin, however, the fact of satanic temptation never slackens human responsibility. (C.R. LIV, 333, 380).

the factors. However inadequate Calvin's interpretation may be, therefore, he is not to be judged on that alone, but rather on the contribution which he made by his practice upon the life of his generation.

The actual progress of salvation is more confidently traced. The sinner is a person, that is, he is morally capable of obedience to the dictates of conscience, but chooses the apparently more gratifying path of concupiscence. The choice does not destroy conscience; "for conscience, instead of allowing us to stifle our perceptions, and sleep on without interruption, acts as an inward witness and monitor, reminds us of what we owe to God, points out the distinction between good and evil, and thereby convicts us of departure from duty".[1] In discomfort the sinner complains that the world is not what it ought to be, and demands "rigid and austere exaction, which remits not one iota of the demand, and leaves no transgression unpunished"[2] - all this from the other sinners. If the sinner ever comes, by force of circumstances - and Calvin has a few means of forcing circumstances to suggest - to believe himself to be wrong, he turns the whole battery of hatred against himself, and falls into despair.[3] If he is reprobate in God's eternal and inscrutable Will, he remains in despair; but God perhaps has added to him "righteousness in that forgiveness of sins by which we are freed from the rigour of the Law".[4] All is of God.

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1 INST. 2: 8: 1. "Non enim **simit** nos perpet**uum** somnum sine sensu dormite nostra conscientia**m**, quin intus testis sit ac monitoix eorum quae Deo debemus, qu**in** boni et mali discrimen nobis obiiciat, atque ita nos accusat dum ab officio discedimus."

2 INST. 2: 7: 15

3 INST. 2: 8: 3.

4 INST. 2: 7: 15

This interpretation of human nature, however, is that of a preacher, not a philosopher. Ultimately, that is, it rests upon the mere statement of human sinfulness and divine revelation. Before the final mystery of mental deficiency Calvin maintains this view. "We see," he says, "that there are many simpletons and idiots who know no more than brute beasts . . . Thus, then, (he concludes), all those who possess mind and intelligence, let them know that God has given them by such a grace and that they are all the more indebted to Him."[1] In other words, Calvin interprets the fact of personality which he has laid down in terms of a general as well as a special grace. The general grace rests upon the mere fact of Creation. Conscience, personality, knowledge of God, is thus a mere fact like the experience of a sense perception, a neutral fact in the sense that it precedes any conscious selection on the part of the individual. This neutrality might be ascribed in the final resort even to conscience, for conscience is alien to a man who is dominated by concupiscence, that is, self will.[2] Following this line of interpretation, one might cite the analogy of a sleeping man and his alarum clock. When he is asleep, he resents the external means of his awakening from the flattery of his dreams. In fact, it is the physical discomfort of the noise that finally changes his state /

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[1] INST. 2: 2: 14. Cheneviere, op. cit., pp. 56 ff.

[2] In this sense man is "totally depraved", so that, when he is saved, he knows it has been by grace alone, and not by conscience in so far as conscience is any faculty of his own. In this connection see T. F. Torrance, "Calvin's doctrine of man" (1949) pp. 84 ff. for references. Calvin can even say, "There is more worth in all the vermin of the world than there is in man, for he is a creature in whom the image of God has been effaced." (Sermon on Job.)

state. And yet, when he is awake he is thankful for the interruption of the vain flattery of dreams. In fact, the alarum clock is a human device created [redacted] for that interruption. So the man in Christ regards with thankfulness the pain of his conversion. From another point of view, however, it is concupiscence that is the neutral factor. For God made man for fellowship and the fact that he is outside of fellowship is "unnatural".[1] The painfulness of conversion therefore may be regarded as being not so much a special device of God as an inevitable conflict with the true natural order. Man falls away, but God does not change and God's purpose does not change. Until man is in harmony with that purpose he is inevitably uncomfortable.[2] Concupiscence is the unnatural factor, and may then be interpreted, as Milton does, as the direct action of Satan in his trespass upon God's territory.

The reason for stressing this "irrational"[3] doctrine of human nature is twofold. In the first place, Calvin sought to achieve the same absolute reference as the medieval lawyers sought in the lex naturae;[4] but in the second, he did not draw the deduction which the "monarchomachists" of the next generation were to do. In terms of the Law, he identified God with the Absolute of the Stoics which had been taken into Western thought. Instead of talking about innate faculties or a law of nature he spoke about the God and Father of /

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[1] See Note 12at end.

[2] This point is enlarged by Prof. J. S. Stewart in his "A Man in Christ."

[3] See Chenevière, op. cit., 46.

[4] But, as Torrance points out, with a most unmedieval dynamic, op. cit., p. 29.

of our Lord and of His self revelation in Scripture and in experience, particularly Christian experience. In practice therefore he is committed to a view that the pagan sages could have only the dimmest knowledge of God - only enough to condemn them, perhaps; or if to say that were to identify them too completely with the reprobate, who also know God and despair, then one might say that the pagan sages knew enough of God - through astronomy, for example - to make them want to know Christ. But of course they know even less of Christ than the Fathers of the old dispensation with its types and symbols which derive from the special gift of God.

This is the dilemma which Barth stresses in his distinction between "formal perfectibility" and "material" sinfulness.[1] It is the dilemma which Brunner tries to break down by saying that "we have to acknowledge the fact that God has ... put us ... into His creation, whose laws can be known in spite of sin by those who know God in Jesus Christ."[2] This view may be accepted since it makes the knowledge of nature depend upon saving knowledge of Christ. Whether the deduction is admissible is another question. Is there a subjective as well as an objective natural theology? That is to say, can we speak not only of "such - knowledge of God in His creation as can come only to those who are already enlightened by the Christian revelation of him", but also of "such a knowledge of God as <u>might be supposed</u> to be accessible to the heathen, etc." The "might be supposed", on the face of the argument, vitiates it. For it is Christians who do the supposing; and Christians may say many things about /

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1. "Nein," Natural Theology, p. 88.
2. "Nature and Grace," <u>ibid.</u>, p. 52.

about the heathen and the reprobate which they, the heathen and the reprobate, might indignantly repudiate, for example, that they are sinners, or that grace is intended for them in Christ.

Brunner's arguments against this restricted interpretation of personality and revelation are based upon the fact that, as a matter of experience, the idea of justice, like the idea of God, is an absolute, and that, therefore, if one is to narrow down the law of God to an experience acknowledged only by a section of humanity, one is denying its essential justice. Even on the lower level of interpretation, of course, the Decalogue would have a political, a paedagogic and an indicative use.[1] In a Christian society it would be the expression of God's will, the "natural" law of the community. It would for the same reason have the paedogogic use since it would point to its Author as infinitely beyond human conception and yet graciously pleased to deposit a pattern of obedience in human categories. And it would, again for the same reason, have the indicative use of driving the Christian citizenship away from the legalism of mere obedience into the tension of a faith that should wait upon the moving of the Holy Spirit. But outside that definite community there would be no such knowledge and no such development. Brunner argues that not only the facts are against this assumption but also the theology of man - man as such - created in the image of his Maker.

Without pursuing this particular controversy one can remark upon some assumptions of Calvin. He was by no means a sectarian either /

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1 Divine Imperative, pp. 140 ff.

either in theology or in politics. The very force of his anti-papalism derived from his conviction that the papacy was a human assumption of divine right. The Church of Rome, therefore, was not a church, although it might embody churches.[1] That is to say, its assumptions were fundamentally in error, although one might say of some of its members that, not appreciating the implications of Roman theology, they called themselves Roman Catholics but were in reality true Christians, worshipping in faith, not in priestly sacrament. Moreover, Calvin asserted that the true Church should develop a true state: not perhaps an identical state for all ages or for every community, but a code of living which could logically be deduced from the revealed Word of God. Finally, it is clear that what Calvinists meant by political freedom was not permission to follow their individual conscience but the right of political propaganda, the right to hold the public conscience. In this sense, Calvin agrees with the medieval conception of justice. The Decalogue for him was an absolute subject to only one conditioning force, namely, the working of the Holy Spirit in the deliberations of the faithful. And since the Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son, this condition does not affect the principle itself so much as the application of the Law of God in special circumstances.

It is significant that that deviation from Calvin's political theory which is known as "monarchomachism" derived from the principle of the sovereignity of the people.[2] No doubt it might be emphasised that /

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[1] INST. 4: 20.-8. See also Mitchell Hunter, op. cit. p.152.

[2] Lang, op. cit., p.72.

that this sovereignty was merely a political fiction and did not derogate from the final sovereignty of Christ; that, in other words, it was the sovereignty of Christ insofar as the Will of God is made known through the Scriptures as interpreted under the Holy Spirit by the people of God in council. Calvin did not accept this view and remained a buttress against it in the isolated splendour of Geneva. His motives are not hard to trace. Human life depends upon Grace. Not only the logic of religion[1] but the logic of being itself, hangs upon the premise of divine mercy. Calvin thus cannot forget human sin even in Christians[2], or perhaps one should say, the tendency to sin even in Christians who, as Christians, know the truth about themselves, namely, their dependence upon God, but are still subject to the temptation to be independent. Calvin of course was not against resistance. Just as he repudiated anarchism on the ground that God ordained the State and the Church, so also he took an active interest in both institutions in order that they might be made to conform to the Word of God. But, as Bohatec emphasises[3], he did not believe in the divine right of the individual. The Word of God may be recognised by individuals but it is recognised as a corporate reference. Thus there was for Calvin, as for Augustine, no salvation outside the church: and thus also any criticism of the state had to be based upon the principle of God's Word, not upon the principle of the people's sovereignty. "Sovereignty" in fact, is just what Calvin denied /

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1 An argument used by Calvin in his Commentary on MICAH, VII.19, quoted by Torrance, op. cit., p. 19.

2 INST. 3: 14: 1.

3 op. cit. pp. 611 ff.

denied to the people. The only sovereignty in his idea of State or Church was that of Christ, and for that very reason the political action of Christ's people had to be purged of any possible suggestion of personal gain. If the sovereign had to be opposed, it must be by the representatives of the people acting as representatives and not as individuals.

## CHAPTER VI.

## The Divine Law.

(i) The "general survey".

(ii) The first table of the Law.

(iii) The second table of the Law.

(iv) The adequacy of the Decalogue.

(i) "The General Survey".

Assuming the unsophisticated view that Calvin held the will of God to be based upon the revelation in His Law we turn to the "general survey" with which he precedes his consideration of each separate commandment. The following are the main points. "In the divine Law human life is instructed not merely in outward decency, but inward spiritual righteousness":[1] Christian citizenship, that is, is based upon an understanding and acceptance of the Law, not upon mere casual, temporary obedience. So Cromwell sought out men who knew what they obeyed and loved what they knew; and so too, in our own irreligious but ideological wars are men and women taught to love the ends for which they fight. Secondly, the Law is not "a kind of Lesbian code" to be "licentiously wrested and strained to any meaning we may desire."[2] The Law has a definite meaning which can be understood in principle by every age and under all circumstances.[3] This is the point which underlies the misunderstandings about Calvin's /

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1 INST. 2: 8: 6. "non ad externam honestatem modo, sed ad interiorem spiritualemque institiam."

2 INST. 2: 8: 8. " instar lesbiae regulae" - omitted in the French. A Lesbian rule was originally a mason's ruler made of lead, a commodity for which, along with wine, the island of Lesbos was famed. By analogy, the Lesbian rule became a rule that could be twisted (so Eth. Nic. v: x: 7) particularly as Lesbos was also noted for its profligacy, particularly that of sexual irregularity, e.g., Sapphism.

3 This is the main theme of the first sermon in the 1562 series (CR. LIV, 235 ff) e.g. "En la Loy, il a comprins tout ce qui estoit bon et utile" (236); ". . . une doctrine suffisante" (ibid.); "il n'a rien oublié de ce qui estoit necessaire et utile" (237). In it " . . . Dieu descend à nous, afin que nous ayons une declaration familiere de sa volonte" (240). It is a "reigle perpetuelle de iustice" (287), the only right interpretation of which is "selon la nature de Dieu" (371). (It is from age to age both in the sense of applying to the true Israel that has succeeded to the Jews (244) and also of applying to all men, since they are in the image of God (see Note 10 at end above)..

Calvin's doctrine of natural law. What he is saying is that the Law of God corresponds to a fundamental moral challenge that is felt by every generation in all circumstances, the Decalogue being, as it were, the distillation of that moral essence. He is saying that no generation is ignorant of the Law, but he is not saying that men, because they know the Law, therefore obey it. He is simply saying that every generation has been responsible to God for the measure of obedience that God ordained; that, in short, the trouble with the world is its sin. Thirdly, he dismisses the idea that because the Decalogue is the quintessence of the divine will it is necessary to "restrict the Spirit of the Law to the strict letter of the words". The best rule, he says, is "to be guided by the principle of the commandment", "the purpose", that is, "for which it was given".[1]

The principle of interpretation which he suggests[2] is based upon the view that "in almost all the commandments", there are "elliptical expressions".[3] Every command either requires or prohibits, is either positive or negative in its expressed demand. The nature of each, however, "is instantly discerned when we look to the principle of the command as its end." For example, the fifth commandment enjoins specific honour to parents, but its principle is that honour should be given to "those on whom (God) has conferred some distinction", such as teachers, magistrates, pastors. Such honour, he says, is "right in itself and pleasing to God", and refusal is "offensive to Him". A second principle of interpretation which he suggests is the assumption of a positive /

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1 INST. 2: 8: 8 " . . . ut deridiculo iure sit futurus, qui legis sensum ad verborum angustias restringere velit".

2 INST. 2: 8: 8-10.

3 "manifestae synecdochae".

positive corollary from a negative commandment - a principle which, he says, "everyone admits". Passive virtue - the abstention from that which is forbidden - was not the whole duty of man; one must pass from the mere negation to the "duties and positive acts" which are implied. For example, the command not to kill is not exhausted by the mere cessation of killing, or even by controlling the inner wish to do violence. The full expression of the commandment is reached only when we are positively set "to aid our neighbour's life by every means in our power". It covers, in other words, "all the offices of charity which can contribute to his preservation".

In discussing the division of the two tables, Calvin characteristically eschewed mere scholastic argument on the one hand, but was not above adding a semi-scholastic argument to aid his main statement. He offers no contribution to the discussion where the division of the two tables of the Law is to fall.[1] He himself prefers the division four and six but he does not quarrel with anyone who makes other views on this particular point. The main thing is that God be held as the spiritual sanction of human conduct. But he adds a quaint argument to his assertion that the main issue in human conduct is sin. God delivered His commandments, he says,[2] "as it were, by halves, using elliptical expressions with a larger meaning than that actually expressed" because "as the flesh is always on the alert to extenuate the heinousness of sin . . . /

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[1] INST. 2: 8: 12.

[2] INST. 2: 8: 10 - "velut dimidiis praeceptis, per synecdochas . . . quid peccatorum foeditatem, nisi ubi palpabilis est, diluere, et speciosis praetextibus inducere semper caro molitur, quod erat in unoquoque transgressionis genere deterrimum et scelerissimum, exemplaris loco proposuit (Deus), cuius ad auditum sensus quoque exhorresceret, quo maiorem peccati cuiuslibet detestationem animis nostris imprimeret.

sin . . . and so cover it with specious pretexts", it is necessary to set forth, "by way of example, whatever is foulest and most iniquitous in each speciss of transgression". "We are often," he goes on, "imposed upon by imagining that the more hidden (the sins) the less heinous they are."[1] We have to be made to "touch" them, to "shudder" at them, before we see them as sin and not as dare-devilry. And so, he adds later, "in order to remove every pretext for excuse" the Law is not simply epitomised under the two heads of love to God and charity to my neighbour, but is extended to these ten incisive particulars which in themselves contain and at the same time illustrate the Will of God for men.

It is important to include in this general survey the statement that the Calvinist society was essentially a religious grouping. Of the first phrase of the first commandment, Calvin points out that its function is introductory to the whole, and designed to prevent the Law being "abrogated by contempt".[2] No Court, of course, can allow contempt of its findings: and in a theocracy the ultimate sanction is not a court but the Deity Himself. But, as Calvin remarks, the people of a theocratic system, admit His "power and authority to command", both because of His "promise to favour" and because they remember His kindness. Because they aspire to membership of His Kingdom they endeavour to please Him. In the "Harmony" he enlarges this view by reference to the "separateness" of the chosen people, namely, emphasis upon the divine origins of the Law. Because of their calling they were to be marked by a sign which should have no significance other than its reference to the /

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1 INST. 2: 8: 12. Compare "Harmony" (CR. LII, 329 ff) where he gives this same interpretation to some of the Mosaic precepts about cleanliness.

2 INST. 2: 8: 13. " . . ne contemptu abrogentur (leges)".

the acknowledged Deity.[1] The Law might thus seem an irrational ideal from the merely utilitarian point of view; its only reason being the command of the Deity and the obedience of His people. A similar irrational imposition of the Law has been noted in discussing the Christian movement into the Teutonic West, where the Sabbath particularly was sanctioned by severe penalties. Luther too gave disproportionate emphasis to the religious practice which derived from his principle of salvation by faith alone, and thus also Calvin draws into his discussion of the first commandment[2] such precepts as those about leprosy, issues and uncleanness in general, the agricultural laws of DEUTERONOMY 22, the distinction of beasts, the ritual of warfare and the prohibition of mixed marriages as judicial expressions of the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". These judicial examples correspond to the ceremonial expressions of the law, the Passover,[3] baptism,[4] and circumcision,[5] the holiness of the first-born, the separation of Nazarites, and so on.

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1 C.R. LII, 331, "Voluit autem hoc symbolo, Deus semen Abrahae monere quam eximior esset illius dignitas, quod segregatum esset a pollutis gentibus."

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 285. The Passover really comes under the fourth commandment (i.e. Sabbath) but may be regarded also as "solemne . . . redemptionis symbolium".

4 Ibid., 287. "Sicuti hodie idem nobis omnibus est baptismus, quo communiter inserimur in corpus Christi". It is worth noting that the sentence goes on to add "singulis tamen suus baptismus confertur, quo certius agnoscant se adoptionis esse participes, ideoque ecclesiae membra".

5 Ibid., 291. "Primo igitur excludit Moses omnes extraneos" - by circumcision.

The principle is important; Christian civilisation is not simply a system of "human" rights; it is a system also of divine rights.[1] A Christian society therefore should not be simply a benevolent democracy; it must involve definite practices symbolical of its authority - Sabbath observance, for example. Throughout the discussion of the Law Calvin constantly returns to the point that these things are done because the society under review is Christian; the discussion itself in fact is a sifting from all the precepts of Scripture of those which could be applicable to persons who approach God in the Name of Jesus Christ. He was firmly logical in applying this principle. Much of his political thought and much of his political opposition can be reduced to his advocacy of principles that rest upon his interpretation of the Decalogue. For example, his urgency of Church attendance: it might be "reasonable" to suppose that visitors to the city might have been excused such attendance, particularly if they were of "another persuasion". Calvin did not so argue.[2] Since they were in Geneva they must accept the practices of Geneva. The practices of Geneva were rigid. During the sermon it was not permissible to hold stall trade in the streets;[3] it was not permitted even to be absent from church.[4] Special commissioners were charged to investigate causes of absence, /

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[1] So that perjury is an abomination in God's sight (LII, 562) as well as a social evil. The Christian was the best of citizens because God was his Sovereign.

[2] Two entries in the "Annales" (March, 1545) C.R. XLIX, 348-9. It is the theme of the fifth sermon of the 1562 series. Since we are "sanctified" (C.R. LIV, 284) we owe this rest from our own interest to God. Calvin agrees that many can be brought together only by pressure (292) but "quand les boutiques sont fermees le Dimanche, qu'on ne travaillera point à la façon commune: c'est afin qu'on ait plus de loisir et de liberté de vacques a ce que Dieu nous commande (ibid.).

[3] C.R. XLIX, 207. Other examples are that children are not allowed to play in the streets (ibid., 234). There are a large number of offences such as being in taverns and playing games (ibid., 233,306,325, 327).

[4] Ibid., 217, 303, 345.

absence, and if these were not satisfactory they would have to be repeated in court next day. In England at a later date the practice of fining for non-attendance at church was regarded as monstrous.[1] Actually, it was a form of toleration to non-attenders, a gesture to liberty of conscience not made in truly Calvinist society.[2]

Some of the laws appear ridiculous and even unjust. The prohibition of "hosen, or doublettes, cut, jagged, embroydered, or lined with silk upon payne of sixty sous"[3] seems a hard blow at youthful enjoyment. Defiance of this law, however, was made by Perrin as a direct challenge of Calvin's position. It was the sort of defiance perpetrated so often in the form of laughing at M. Calvin in church, the defiance that was finally offered him under the theological skirts of Servetus. Calvin was perhaps lacking in a sense of humour, especially when he himself was the object of attack, but the Libertines were lacking in a sense of proportion too. They accepted the "commandements de Dieu" when such obedience was politically useful, when indeed Geneva's independence trembled in the balance; but they rebelled against Calvin's logically deduced religious practise of these same "commandements de Dieu". The principle at stake was not unlike that of the medieval controversy over investiture. No doubt the temptation to the church to meddle in secular affairs, perhaps without detailed knowledge, is considerable. The temptation /

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1 Trevelyan, "English Social History", pp. 180 ff. Galt describes a similar slackening of discipline in his "Annals of the Parish".

2 Not made in any society which rests upon a clear principle. It is possible only in a society such as Locke describes in his "Essay", viz., that has wearied itself in ideological conflict.

3 Quoted from the "Lawes of Geneva", p. 71, by Rilliet, op. cit.

temptation of the state to use the spiritual power of the church to gain control of the national conscience is equally strong.

(ii) The first table of the Law.

In the "Harmony" Calvin detaches as a "Preface"[1] consideration of the phrases, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage", but in the "Institutes"[2] he remarks that this introduction can equally be taken as part of the first commandment itself. Such distinction as may be drawn is that between the statement that God is the Deity acceptable to Israel, and thus the action that may be expected of the said Israel, first in religious practice, then in charitable practice, between the fact of adoption and its condition. The argument pursued depends upon the relationship between absolute Deity and chosen mankind. God is absolute and is not to be mistaken for any of the forms He might choose to adopt. "If anyone were to worship angels in place of God, or vainly imagine any other secret divinity, none will deny that he would place himself under the ban of this law."[3] His choice of His people, therefore, is strictly of His "free love",[4] and thus the relationship of the people is sanctification to His service. "He requires from His people meekness from /

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1 C.R. LII, 209-260.

2 INST. 2: 8: 13.

3 C.R. LII, 262. "Angelos si quis adoret loco Dei, vel arcanum aliud numen stulte imaginetur, hac lege reum teneri nullus negabit."

4 "Pure bonté et gratuite" - in the Sermons (C.R. LIV, 383).

from which they might learn to serve Him". The people of God admit His power and authority to command.[1]

Calvin saw in the Decalogue a more than individual reference. Even in the first table, in the first commandment indeed, he discusses the status of minister and magistrate in the divine administration. "Afterwards Moses remembered that God would govern His church by the hand and work of men in such a way as that nothing should be taken away from Himself".[2] Thus "we see . . . that pastors have been created from the beginning, not in order that they might themselves have dominion, or make the church obedient to their own plans, but rather in order to be instruments of the Holy Spirit."[3] Magistrates hold a similar position under God. It is true that God's truth needs no external support and magistrates are not to condescend to the Law of God. "It pleases God" to command the use of the sword,[4] and therefore He permits the existence of a magisterial office. Certainly the office is accorded dignity and is defended against mistaken piety that argues the Christian repudiation of the sword; but the place to which it is restored is a strictly subordinate one. The office that first exercised tyranny over the true faith now "kisses the Son".[5] God accepts /

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1 INST., 2: 8: 14.

2 C.R. LII, 274. Videmus ergo creatos ab initio fuisse pastores, non ut dominarentus ipsi, vel suis commentis ecclesiam subiicerent; sed tantum ut spiritus sancti essent organa".

3 Cf. Sermons: of magistrates, he says, " . . . quand il y a des magistrats, si nous leur sommes rebelles, si nous vous nous eslever contre la police . . .que nous ne faisons point outrage aux creatures: mais que c'est Dieu qui est assailli par nous," (C.R. LIV, 317). Of the preaching office he says"(quand) la parolle de Dieu nous soit preschee par les hommes" it is "ainsi que si nous voyons sa maieste face à face" (ibid,400)

4 C.R. LII, 356-7.

5 PSALM II.

accepts the obeisance and permits the dedication of political power for the welfare of the Christian state. But the function of magistracy is strictly useful. The argument that Calvin puts forward is that one would not expect the magistrate to suffer drunkenness, fornication or petty theft or sordid murder, and why therefore should one expect him to suffer contempt of the Church?[1] This is an interpretation of the civil magistracy as strictly administrative body. It denies the idea of any "divine right of kings" to legislate. The church is the keeper of the public conscience, the court in which the Holy Spirit may be thought to move. Thus in a theocracy any new idea - that is any idea not strictly deducible from the premises of the declared Law - would require a first sanction from the court of the church.[2]

The first commandment is thus given a functional relationship to the remaining commandments. It lay down the principle that they are not to be "abrogated by contempt" either from within or without the Church. From within there is the sanction of membership. Baptism[3] - the symbol of membership - and excommunication[4] - the symbol of exclusion - provide the /

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1 C.R. LII, 356 "Quid autem mirum si magistratus ubet Deus esse gloriae suae vindices, qui furta, scortationes, ebrietates, a poena eximi non vult, nec patitur?" In the same passage is a remark reminiscent of the Servetus affair. "Caeterum ut praepostera est eorum severitas qui superstitiones gladio tuentur: ita in politia bene constitua minime tolerandi sunt profani homines, a quibus religio convellitur".

2 The king is to be found in the Church so that he will maintain purity or worship not only as a policy, but from conviction. Ibid, 369, "En, cur Deus passus non fuerit aliunde peti regem quam ipso foveret ecclesiae sinu; ut purum cultum quem a pueritia imbiberat, foreret ac tueretur." So also Nobbs op. cit., pp. 4: 26-7. What is true of kingship is true also of "political" laws. They exist not only to promote mutual equity but also the veneration of God, C.R. LII, 354. Thus civil discipline requires constant reference to the church courts. Ibid., 371.

3 Harmony, C.R. LII, 287 " . . . nobis omnibus est baptismus, quo communiter inserimus in Corpus Christi, singulis tamen suus baptismus confertus, etc."

4 Ibid., 320 - Et certe huic caerimoniae respondet excumminicatio, qua purgatur ecclesia . . . " It is noteworthy that an emphasis is laid here upon individual responsibility of Christians.

the limits of the moral separation of God's Israel from the world. But there is also the problem of enemies without, "certain impious despisers who regard it as the shortest method, to hold all religious observance in derision".[1] No doubt Calvin was thinking of the Libertines, for even Calvin's Geneva was not an absolute theocracy in the sense of having absorbed all opposition. Calvin knew political eclipse. He also knew the presence of religious apathy and secret opposition. We are to beware of "superstition" he says, and there is evidence that superstition took the form not only of secret allegiance to Rome but also of positive idolatry and witchcraft.[2] His theocracy had not yet become the tidy unity of church and state he would have liked. Nevertheless Calvin offers a description of the city of God as he deduced it from the Word of God;[3] and he did not intend it to be an "ideal" city [illegible], an impractical idea like Eden but rather a pattern as yet unattained but attainable.

The basis of Calvin's practical hopes was the place of the individual in the system. The visible church was the body of individuals. The preacher addressed individuals[4] and sought to bring them into conformity by /

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1 INST. 2: 8: 16.

2 Annales C.R. XLIX: 208: 333-4. The second and third Sermons of the 1562 edition treat this matter, e.g. C.R. LIV 252: 258 refers to pagan superstition. The superstition of the Papacy is a more culpable error, at least from the hierarchical side.

3 The Word of God is not here simply equivalent to Scripture: it includes public consent and the suffrages of the people (" . . . religio non tantum publico consensu et hominum suffragiis recepta . . .") as well as indisputable proofs ("indubiis testimoniis") C.R. LII 356. Cf. p. 360 ". . . acquiescendum esse in veritate cognita, ut clausae sint aureo diversis omnibus figmentis."

4 Ibid. 355. ". . Iam, quid non sufficeret semel esse scripta lege edoctos de probo Dei cultu, nisi quotidiana praedicatio, diverte instruit Deus suos autoritate."

by their consent. The court of the church was based upon individual suffrage, as were also the offices of ministry and magistracy.[1] The real power of the Christian state thus rested upon the "faith" of the individual, his sense of responsibility to his Creator. Calvin developed the implications of this relationship in his insistence that the individual must be prepared to give evidence of wrong-doing known to him, and that in the case of any concerted anti-social activity the ring-leader must be sought out and held responsible. In short government was strictly by consent and no one was to be judged except by principles acknowledged to be just. The priests, Calvin says, were not enjoined to pass judgment except upon "manifest symptoms" of uncleanness. Nor is anyone to be convicted except according to the "plain Word of God."[2]

Consent depends upon incentive. Calvin's state was not "ideal" in the sense of being divorced from practical advantage. It was not only a "good" state, it was also a "right" state - that is a state directed towards the best interests of the community. Calvin does not ignore the phrase "that thy days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord /

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[1] Doumergue, V esp. p. 102, gives details of election. Ordonnances (C.R. XXXVIII a 17 ff discusses the institution, which is to be according to the primitive order (leglise ancienne) i.e. according to Scripture. The matter is discussed first by brother ministers, then by the Council, and finally presented to the people (la compagne de fidelles). This mainly unchanged procedure received longer treatment in the 1561 "Ordonnances" (ibid. 94 ff). Individual suffrage for the magistracy applied of course only to citizens: and the refugee element - including Calvin himself - were thus not eligible to vote.

[2] Ibid., 320. "Neque enim de morbo occulto sacerdotes voluit Deus cognoscere, sed postquam manifesta indicia emerserant". The Christian analogy is excommunication, which, however, is to be administered justly, which presumably means "manifesto Dei verbo.... ne suo arbitrio iudicent homines." (Ibid. 357).

Lord thy God giveth thee".[1] God offers prosperity to those obedient to Him and threatens those who disobey Him.[2] Obedience to God is thus not disinterested in the sense that God requires us simply to bolster up His authority. God is demanding this obedience of us for our own good. For Himself He can do without us. His calling is free,[3] as His bounty is undeserved. The right response of man therefore, whether in prosperity or in adversity, is humility and gratitude; and it is according to the degree of these qualities that Calvin judges institutions and religious endeavour, whether allegedly Christian or openly pagan.

In the second commandment Calvin finds a description of the worship of God's Own appointment.[4] The destruction of images was an outward expression of the fundamental revision of worship and practice that was to be introduced. In the "Harmony" Calvin examines at great length the tabernacle, the sacrifice and the priesthood as they are described in the Pentateuch. He acknowledges the vastness of the subject and the possibility of fanciful interpretation but nevertheless expects to find the principles of the right ministry.[5] Rather quaintly he discusses the ideal of centralised worship in Jerusalem as being without advantage for all the expense and trouble caused both to offerants and to Levites, but the principle of the levitical right to tithes is established, and at the same /

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1 DEUT. V, 16.

2 E.g. with dearth: so C.R. LII, 389.

3 Ibid., 444, " . . . gratuita vocatione Dei, cuius est omnia creare ex nihilo." Compare the fifteenth sermon in the 1562 series. (particularly C.R. LIV, 418-9 which quote the text DEUT. V, 10). It ends, "Car en ce monde Dieu nous veut faire sentir sa bonté, afin d'estre atterez plus haut etc." That is, earthly prosperity is closely related to spiritual favour.

4 Harmony (C.R. LII, 391) cf. INST. 2: 8: 17.

5 Ibid., 395 : also 326 concerning the cleansing of lepers.

same time the horror of schism is set forth. The ceremonies of the tabernacle themselves he excuses on the ground that God laid down these in order that His people might be kept from something worse if they should turn their eyes to their pagan neighbours, but they are not without symbolical meaning.[1] The candle-sticks, for example, indicate that we require the illumination of God's presence to understand our ways aright.[2]

Under the same typology he describes[3] the levitical priest as an expression of the true mediation that was to be shown forth in Christ,[4] but he emphasises that they were strictly subordinate officers. The Popish deduction of priesthood is thus quite wrong, for this reason, that the levitical priesthood was strictly subject to the divine choice and not to any human mechanics of ordination. But however subject the priests were charged to show forth the highest piety to the people,[5] and it was in this function that they might be said to differ from the laity. Calvin mentions several points of this special piety. The priest was not allowed to mourn, for example, because he was to be so devoted to God's Will as to exercise a perfect resignation. Again in private life and particularly in the execution of his office the priest was to be a model of modest bearing, not ambitious and yet not backward in rebuking such as were bringing destruction upon themselves by their wickedness /

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1 Ibid., 403 ff.

2 Ibid., 409. Nisi enim nobis praeluceat coelestis doctrina, nihil praeter meram vanitatem pariet sensus noster.

3 Ibid., 424 ff.

4 Ibid., 444 ff. ". . . quicumque creantur hodie ministri et pastores ecclesiae, Christo tradi quasi sub manum; ne quid sibi imperii usurpent, sed modeste se gerant, tanquam rationem reddituri coram ipso, qui princeps est pastorum . . . quid eripitus Christo quod suum est, si alius quispiam fingitur successor Aharon."

4 Ibid., 448. The high priest was forbidden mourning, the others with certain restrictions. There is a striking comment upon this requirement from Calvin's own bereavement of son and wife. (Reyburn op. cit., p. 146)

wickedness. The priest was not to be an ascetic but both in his table[1] and in his marriage[2] he was to be discreet, so that an example of decency should be maintained before God's people by God's visible servant. And for this service the people of God are responsible to God for the maintenance;[3] in other words the priest must devote his whole life to the administration of his duty, and the people for whom it is administered owe to God the duty of maintaining the officiating servant.[4] Calvin adds that tithes ought to be paid for the local administration, not, as in papal administration, to some distant exchequer.[5]

Of sacrifice, Calvin says it is a sort of natural law. The motive[6] to make sacrifice itself is a condemnation of those who make the wrong sacrifice, that is the sacrifice that is not based upon the Word of God. "The true seasoning which gives grace to sacrifice is found nowhere except in God's Word".[7] Lacking knowledge and obedience of God's Word, the offerant falls into the error of believing his sacrifice to be in itself or through the person of the priest, efficacious. This is the supreme error of popery. There is a distinction, Calvin says, between such /

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1 Ibid., 452, 454.
2 Ibid., 454.
3 Ibid., 461.
4 At the same time he denies that the dictates of Holy Scripture should be confined to the clergy. It concerns the common people, and one of the errors of Rome is the allegation of two spiritual classes - C.R. LIV, 385.
5 LII, 480-1.
6 Ibid., 489. "Mos sacrificandi semper in usu fuit apud omnes gentes . . . "It was suggested "arcano spiritus Dei instinctu", ibid., 418 but "nescivit tota gentilitas cuo Deum sanguine placari opus esset" . . . "unde colligimus, reprobatos fuisse omnes gentium cultus, quoniam in Deo verbo fundati non erant." "Tantum hoc fixum maneat, ipso more sacrificandi, quamvis adulterino, convictas fuisse propriae indignitatis, est agnoscere deberent, humano generi non aliter propritium esse Deum quam reconciliatione interposita." This view is stated also in INST 2: 7: 1
7 Ibid., 511. "Porro vera conditura, quae gratiam sacrificiis conciliet, nusquam reperitur mos in Dei verbo."

such an error and separating the priest by dress and discipline from others; "he who is the mediator between God and men should be free from all impurity and stain; and since no mortal could truly supply this, a type was substituted in place of the reality, from whence believers might learn that another Mediator was to be expected; hence the dignity of the sons of Aaron was only typical, and not true and substantial".[1] Calvin draws here a "high" doctrine of the ministry as an office without allowing any special privilege to the individual.[2] It is the Spirit that anoints to the calling of sacrifice; the ordinary person brings the sacrifice and yet does not actually make the offering. The priest takes the bullock but catches the blood in order to symbolise that "now, the blood of Christ appears before His (God's) face."[3] The priest is an "instrument" of God.[4]

As a "civil supplement" to the law Calvin develops the theme "in the world but not of it". "As long as we live among unbelievers, we cannot escape those dealings with them which relate to the ordinary affairs of life; but if we approach nearer, so that a greater intimacy should arise, we open the door as it were to Satan".[5] The Israelites were /

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1 Ibid., 501, "qui enim mediator est Dei et hominum, omni sorde et macula purum esse oportet", etc.

2 Ibid., 525. This passage is comparable with INST. 4: 3: 5 ff. Calvin's point is the refutation of the Roman "diabolicum figmentum de satisfactionibus" (ibid., 528).

3 Ibid., 507-8. "Neque enim private homini permittitur manibus suis immolare ipsam victimam" . . . "Neque enim aliunde sacrificandi dignitas quam ex gratia spiritus, cuius pignus (i.e. priestly calling) erat externa unetio". Cf. p. 325. "Non potest ergo absolvere Dei minister nisi quem ante Deus absolverit . . . secundas partes sustinet minister."

4 Like the prophet. Calvin constantly refers in the Sermons to the utterance of God "par la bouche" of Moses, prophets, or modern preacher.

5 Ibid. 549. "Quamdiu versamur inter incredulos, commercia quae ad communem vitam spectant effigere non possumus: verum si proprius accedimus, ut inde oriatur maior familiaritas, ianuam quodammodo aperimus Satanae".

were commanded to smite the Amelekites, their distant kinsmen, not from mere vindictiveness, but to punish the sins even of personal relations with "the same severity as those of other nations".[1] God's people represented God's justice on earth, and were charged to administer it with their own hands.[2] They were not to seek refuge from wickedness simply by withdrawing themselves from it, but were to be active crusaders. At the same time they were by implication permitted to enjoy neutral relationships with the wicked. This is a doctrine which could be misused as an apologetic for so-called "Puritan" capitalism or imperial crusade. Niebuhr remarks upon it in his "Children of Light and Children of Darkness",[3] and the remark may be taken up here although strictly it refers to property. After discussing the original communism of the Church and the acceptance of the idea of private property which was forced upon the medieval church "as either the requirement of natural law or as an inevitable supplement of positive law," he goes on to say, "It remained, however, for orthodox Protestantism, particularly Calvinism, to accept property distinction without scruple or distinction." Quoting a sermon of Calvin's,[4] he points out that the emphasis was not so much upon the virtue of gaining property as upon the Divine Will that it should be owned. This emphasis may lead to humility and doubtless Calvin intended that /

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1 Ibid., 554, "ut eodem poena rigore persequantur scelera Amelec, que aliorum gentium."

2 Ibid., 557 ff.

3 (London 1945) pp. 66 ff.

4 DEUT. VIII, 14-20 - C,R. LIV, 627. "Que les autres soyent riches devant que d'estre nais . . . neantmoins que cela n'est point de cas forticit; mais que la providence de Dieu domine pas dessus".

that it should, since he says also that God permits rich and poor so that we may have occasion to do good. But, as Niebuhr points out, the reference of riches to an act of Providence is less attractive than a blunt pride in one's earnings. It leads, he says, to "the hypocrisies of bourgeois and plutocratic idealism in which charity became a screen for injustice."

The charge against Calvinism can scarcely be rebutted. But it does not fall in the same damaging way upon Calvin himself. In the "Institutes" he refers finally to the "threatenings" of God that are attached to this commandment.[1] Rather unexpectedly, they are couched in the analogy of marriage and family life. One would have thought Calvin would have avoided this analogy as savouring too much of humanism. There is, however, the same emphasis upon the imtimacy of the believer and his God as the priest exhibits when he kisses the Altar during the Mass. Calvin's deduction is not, of course, the mystical one. His emphasis is upon the husband's disciplinary treatment of the wife. In short, if God provides the believer with "pin-money", He is also very near at hand with His threatening Hand, in sickness, misfortune, and death. Perhaps the danger of later Calvinism was its development away from this aspect of human circumstances. The money became more secure, in short, and the danger of its loss becoming less, the charitable conditions of its use became detached from the reality of religious duty.

The third commandment is almost self-explanatory. We are not to think anything that is not "fitted to extol the greatness of His sacred /

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[1] INST., 2: 8: 18.

sacred Name."[1] In particular we are to avoid the utterance of blasphemy, the "perversion of His adorable mysteries to purposes of ambition" the throwing "of obloquy upon His works".[1] Blasphemy however was not simply a matter of bad taste in a Calvinist society, because the taking of oaths was itself a sincere invocation of God. A comment has been made upon modern treaties that they are no longer more than "political" that is to say, opportunist, mere statements of de facto relationships without any expectation of honourable fulfilment.[2] Calvin discusses under the heading of this commandment the making and fulfilling of vows such as the monastic vows or vows of pilgrimage. Their error is not as much in the vow as in the mistaken intention. The monastic vow, for example, involves denial of equally binding obedience to serve God in the family and in the world.[3] The vow of pilgrimage is " a marvellous fascination of the devil"[4] since Christ has laid down the principle of true worship in spirit and in truth. Moreover the oath, used perversely, could be a real invocation of the dark powers; it could be employed "for nefarious purposes" such as "necromancy, cursing, illicit exorcism, and other impious incantations."[5]

There was a place for oaths, however. "An oath . . . is a calling God to witness that what we say is true", and is therefore a "profession of religion"[6] Thus only upon "necessary occasions" could the /

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1 INST., 2: 8: 22. The fourth Sermon in the 1562 edition deals mainly with this question of "mocquerie". One aspect of mocquerie is the discussion of holy matters in taverns! (C.R. LIV, 281-2)

2 For Calvin, a covenant between men amounted to a sacred engagement. C.R. LII, 563. See Note 13 for an analysis of the modern political situation by F. M. Van Asbeck.

3 Ibid., 564 ff.

4 Ibid., 569. "diaboli fascinatio".

5 INST., 2: 8: 22.

6 INST., 2: 8: 23-4.

the practice be used, where, for example, "some purpose of religion or clarity is to be served". Calvin particularly discusses the refusal of the Anabaptists to take the oath in a Court of Law, and attacks it on the ground of blasphemy, since such a person suggests that his private word is sufficient guarantee of divine truth. The objection they commonly made to oaths was the prohibition of Jesus. Calvin's reply[1] is that Jesus Christ is not to be distinguished from the revelation of God in the Old Testament, so that His words cannot be set against the Law as a "stumbling-block". Since the Law therefore permitted oaths, the objection of Jesus must have been directed towards some specific corruption. Calvin finds this corruption in the pharisaic oaths "which transgressed the rule of the Law". This distinction between those oaths that are permissible, and those that are "vain" - thoughtless or superfluous, is Calvin's own. On a point of exegesis he sharply repudiates the argument that we are to swear "not at all". "The expression applies not to the word swear, but to the subjoined forms of oaths" such as the habit of swearing by heaven and earth instead of boldly taking the divine Name itself. The exegesis may be thin, but the underlying idea is clear. Calvin was prepared to accept the principle that in private matters a man's word could be his bond - and therefore he deprecates the taking of private oaths. But in public life he did not trust Anabaptists. To him they were "des gens quil tiennent division"[2] and their private opinions were not therefore tolerable /

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1 INST., 2: 8: 26-7.

2 The phrase is not directly Calvin's. It occurs in a minute of Council October 5th, 1537 as a precis of a statement made by "Me. G. Farel et Cauvin". In a similar minute dated 19th March, 1537, the treatment of all convicted "Katabaptists" was to be banishment. (C.R. XLIX, 210). Compare Underwood, op. cit., p. 24 - "the Reformers saw in the Anabaptist movement nothing less than the destruction of the very basis of society itself."

tolerable in a state which valued its integrity.

The fourth commandment[1] "stands in peculiar circumstances apart from the others", since it has for Christians a significance it cannot have for Jews.[2] Nevertheless the sabbath of the Lord's day still represents a type of spiritual rest from one's own works and dependence upon the righteousness of God. It also fulfils in the Christian dispensation the synagogue function of meditation upon the divine Law. Finally, it has a humanitarian and social purpose. The day, Calvin emphasises, is nothing in itself. The mere reverence of the seventh day belongs to the "ceremonial" Law which has been abrogated by Christ with the other legal enactments. But the underlying spiritual duty that initiated the legal expressions remains to be fulfilled; and this duty belongs to the human response to the divine summons. The creature owes to his Maker a regular acknowledgment of duty, a regular "resting"[3] from his own works and interests as s symbol of his utter dependence upon God, and thus the sabbath rest is a Christian obligation.

"There is no commandment", Calvin reminds us,[4] "the observance of /

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[1] INST. 2: 8: 28. Harmony C.R. LII, 577. Sermons 5, p. 6. C.R. LIV, 283 ff.

[2] "le jour du repos a esté une ombre sous la Loy, iusque à la venue de notre Seigneur Iesus Christ, pour figurer que Dieu demande que les hommes se reposent du tout de leurs oeuvres propres . . . qu'il nous faut mortifier ce qui est de nostre nature, si nous voulons estre conforme à nostre Dieu (C.R. LIV, 283).

[3] This response is not merely passivity". . . ut se exerceant fideles in Dei cultu." Harmony, C.R. LII, 576.

[4] INST. 2: 8: 29.

of which the Almighty more strictly enforces", and yet it is not a "superstitious observance of days".[1] It is not the day that matters, but the act of rest. Calvin therefore derides the pursuit of what can or cannot be called Sabbath work, but on the other hand pursues the principle of sabbatic rest in unexpected directions. In discussing the sabbatic year of fallow agriculture he suggests[2] that the rotation farming of his own times had done away with the necessity, provided that human effort should not be pursued with a view to "intemperance and luxury". He did not object to technical improvement provided that the main principles of duty were not transgressed.

The origin of the "Calvinist Sunday" is the conjunction of this principle of necessary humility with the principle that "religious meetings are both enjoined . . . by the Word of God"[3] and in themselves obviously necessary as a means of religious observance "to retain decency, order and peace in the Church".[4] These duties lay upon Christian men as the responsibility corresponding to their rise in spiritual status. When they had been permitted by the Church to dance round the maypole on a Sunday afternoon, they had been excluded from the highest privileges of faith. /

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[1] Ibid., 2: 8: 31.

[2] C.R., LII, 587.

[3] INST., 2: 8: 32.

[4] Ibid., 2: 8: 33. - Doumergue, op. cit., IV, pp. 183 ff. makes the point that the so-called "Calvinist" Sunday with its emphasis upon restriction was really the work of Knox and the Puritans.

faith. Now they had to bear their share of the due worship of God. The servant was free on the Sabbath, not perhaps to go and play skittles but to take a share in the Church equal to that of his social superiors. In short, the Sabbath commandment, like the other commandments of the first table, emphasises the fact that the social pattern under discussion rests upon Christian principles, and thus is bound to make acknowledgment of its origins and its goal.

(iii) The Second Table of the Law.

Professor Tawney recalls a nineteenth century statesman who deplored the "interference of religion with private life". This gentleman was no doubt of the school of Butler who disliked "enthusiasm" and thought a dignified balance could be reached between the Will of the Almighty and the enlightened self-interest of His creatures. Calvin might have shared the dislike of "enthusiasm", but "self-interest" was of secondary importance to his main theme. Material prosperity indeed was not eschewed by Calvin. Obedience to the Will of God brings to His servants the fulfilment of His gracious promises not only spiritual but physical. Where Calvin would have differed from the individual of Tawney's reference is in the assumption that "religion" is an activity quite distinct from secular action.[1] Even in the second table of the Law Calvin insists that /

1 "Ainsi dónce [Dieu] veut esprouver nostre obeissance, et l'amour que nous luy portons, quand il nous commande de cheminer avec nos prochains en toute droiture et equité, et que nous vivions ensemble en telle communion et concorde, qu'un chacun ne soit point ordonné a soy . . . " C.R. LIV, 309.

that the ultimate authority is of God.[1] It is of God even for pagans although they at best only dimly perceive His workings; and for Christians God is paramount in every detail of the established ordinances. The only difference between the first and second tables therefore is that the first concerns worship while the second concerns secular - "natural" - activity. Both are part of the necessary obedience of God's creatures to Himself.

The fifth commandment, to honour parents, derives its authority from the mere fact that God has so commanded, and not from any advantages of a secular nature that might accrue.[2] Honour to parents can of course be drawn out to honour of any persons whom God should place in office over us and Calvin can say that the magistrates are s sort of parent in their office.[3] Legitimate subjection is thus a Christian virtue. In the first instance it is of no account whether the person holding the office is worthy or not of the authority vested in him, although it is allowed that no man is to be condemned unheard.[4]

Here /

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1 C.R. LII, 605 ff. "Principibus esse obediendum senus ipse naturae dictat". "Ergo in hoc pracepto, sicut in aliis, Deus per synecdochen sub una specie complectitus totum genus, etc." This manner of argument is the direction of Calvin's idea of "natural" law. God does not add to His original principle, although He may explain it by expanding references (ibid. 609) or by a clearer repetition (INST. 2: 8: 1) of His Law (not the law of "nature") stamped on the human heart, by His written Law. A reference to pagans as under His Law is C.R. LII, 622 " . . . lex ad exteros quoque extenditur . . . quia sine exceptione cunctos mortales creavit ad imaginem suam, ideo in fidem tutelamque suam recepit..."

2 The seventh sermon in the 1562 edition discusses this commandment. C.R. LIV, 309 ff.

3 Ibid., 610.

4 Ibid., 608. Even if magistrates are elected by popular vote they are to be regarded as - qua magistrates - above mere public utility. Rather public utility - regular government - is itself God's will for His creatures so that the office of magistrate fits into God's ultimate Will, (ibid. 610). This is the line that Brunner develops in his doctrine of "ordinances" of creation and of preservation.

Here again Calvin is resting his social theory not upon a human system but upon the divine revelation of a divine justice. Parenthood, he says, is a natural prototype of the divine demand for our obedience, but instead of pursuing the analogy he immediately proceeds to discuss the possible perversion of the ordinance. Such obedience - to both father and mother - ought to be a step in our ascent to the Supreme Parent, but if our earthly parents "instigate us to transgress the Law, they deserve not to be regarded as parents, but as strangers attempting to seduce us from obedience to our true Father".[1] Presumably this principle could hold in the case of corrupt magistrates also.[2] The final issue is between each one and His God, in the sense at least that "the system" of "the home" is never to be blamed for my sin.

In dealing with various appendices to this law, Calvin emphasises the sanction of life and death which were attached to the original law. It is an interesting question how far Calvin and the Reformers generally were prepared to obey the commandment of God in administering the death penalty. There was much controversy on the subject.[3] Calvin himself here turns off to a more general reference to the blessing of long life, which he regards as a gift of God. "The duration /

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1 INST. 2: 8: 38.

2 Legitimate resistance to authority, particularly secular authority, falls under the section on monarchomachism (pp. 301ff). Resistance to ecclesiastical authority, e. g. to Rome, was already established upon the Word of God. (See above under Luther - Chap. III Section i .)

3 C.R. LII, 622 )
INST. 2: 8: 39-40) This is the basis, Calvin says, of "equité" that is to say, equity derives from (1) the Will of God and (2) the principle of sin in our personality. It appears, therefore, that equity, if equity is to be the natural law for Calvin, is a negative principle.

duration of long life", he says,[1] "is a proof of the divine benevolence toward us;" not, he hastens to add, "as if in itself it constituted happiness, but because it is an ordinary symbol of the divine favour to the pious. His judgment borders on the pietistic. Like the judgment upon material wealth, it is open to misconstruction and even hypocrisy. No doubt the religious man will regard material wealth and long life as gifts of God, just as he will regard death as a translation to "a richer and more substantial manifestation" of God. Life and death, as riches and poverty, are not quite so simply distributed; and Calvin was realistic enough to perceive that the righteous might be cut off in their prime, and too often do the unrighteous seem miraculously preserved even "in battle or in brawls." We can only suppose that they "are reserved for severer punishment in the world to come". In the main, however, Calvin rests upon the comfortable doctrine that honesty and piety are the best policy.[2]

The sixth commandment - not to kill - receives in the "Institutes" the shortest treatment of the ten. Obviously the matter was more academic in its interest than the others. In the "Harmony" Calvin finds opportunity for quoting classical authorities rather more than in his other discussions.[3] Medieval civilisation had moulded the energies /

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1 INST., 2: 8: 37.

2 This criticism would not apply to Calvin himself. Happiness for him was as follows: ". . . nous voyons, que si nous recevons la doctrine en humilité, que nous demandions d'y obeir, que la fin ne peut estre que heureuse, que nous serons certains de nostre salut." (C.R. LIV, 411). That is to say, the criticism of Calvin himself is not that he was inconsistent but that his religious certainty was not sufficiently translated in terms of political and economic facts.

3 The eighth Sermon in the 1562 edition C.R. LIV, 321 ff.

energies of the original Teutonic clans into a "natural" horror of murder. Calvin speaks of the "unity of the whole human race"[1] and of man in general as "both the image of God and our flesh" possessing a right to his life and person.[2] The Christian emphasis is thus the "extra mile" of not only abstaining from murder but positively of doing "what in us lies to defend the life of our neighbour, to promote whatsoever tends to his tranquillity, to be vigilant in warding off harm, and when danger comes, to assist in removing it."[3] The roots of the command lie deeper. Wrath itself is to be condemned, hatred that is, which lacks opportunity of directing any particular action but which causes secret rejoicing at misfortune in the person hated. "However you may disguise the fact", he says, "where either wrath or hatred is, there is an inclination to do mischief"[4]

Calvin draws out practical deductions from this rather conventional statement. For example, he infers that "if the safety of the body is so carefully provided for, how much care and exertion is due to the safety of the soul, which is of immeasurably higher value in the sight of God."[5] One deduction that could be drawn from this comparison is the spiritual exhortation to attend to things of the soul, but another is the right of the Christian state to direct and perhaps even liquidate spiritual [illegible]. This argument was the justification of the /

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1 INST., 2: 8: 39. "hominun genus unitate".
"imago Dei est homo, et caro nostra".

2 INST., 2: 8: 40. The same principle occurs in the Sermons. " ..... quand au parle des hommes, il y a quelque communauté esgale: car nous sommes tous descendus de la race d'Adam: nous sommes d'une mesme nature: tout cela emporte, que les hommes sont pareils". C.R. LIV, 321. See also Note on "image".

3 INST., 2: 8: 39.

4 Ibid.

5 INST., 2: 8: 40. See also above, p. 159 and reference in the "Harmony".

the Inquisition, and it is the argument that Brunner deplores as having been steadily reduced in its final authority from God to Nature and from the anaemic Nature of naturalism to the cynical authority of nationalism. Thus in order to preserve the soul of a pure Aryan "A" it might become justifiable to dispose of non-Aryans "B" to "Z".

On this fundamental issue Calvin does not offer any leading. Inside the accepted state he developes the many applications of the right of the individual to protection and just retribution.[1] He enlarges upon the security of person against all bodily harm, including the danger of abortion to the unborn, and the danger of unjust or excessive punishment for a proved crime. He even refers to the rights of dumb nature to humane treatment at the hands of Christians. But he does not supply a satisfactory deduction on the subject of war. On the phrase in DEUTERONOMY 20, v. 12 - "if he will make no peace" - Calvin can only say that the permission sounds unjust according to classical law, and can only be explained either in terms of a permission granted to the hard-hearted Jews, or else of a direct fulfilment of God's vengeance upon certain tribes.[2] This is perhaps the weakest point of the exposition, marking off Calvin as an accepter of the sword for the settlement of human differences and as the means of fulfilling national destinies. Perhaps Tawney is however too unjust in sneering at the folly which, having at last reached economic prosperity, cast /

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[1] C.R. LII. The same development occurs in the Sermon. Calvin defends civil laws, " . . . afin que'on se gouverne quant à la police exterieure seulement, que personne no soit outragé, qu'un chacun dit son droict, qu'on garde paix et concorde entre les hommes."

[2] Ibid. 632 ff.

cast it away in wars of religion.[1] We are doing the same ourselves and have not yet found security for peace.

In the seventh commandment - not to commit adultery - Calvin passes from the abuse of marriage to its institution.[2] In the "Harmony" he is content to enumerate the various forms of abuse that are mentioned in the Pentateuch, and to establish the principles of modesty in body, mind and dress. In particular he supports the degrees of affinity which are laid down and which Calvin alleges it is one of the pope's prime offences to set aside in order to make himself "a fat game-bag".[3] Of divorce he says briefly that it may have been "granted in indulgence to the Jews, yet Christ pronounces that it was never in accordance with the Law, because it is directly repugnant to the first institution of God,"[4] namely the family. Marriage is thus a natural law; that is to say a law of nature as God ordained nature.[5] In the "Institutes"[6] Calvin pursues a slightly different line. Like Paul he lays down the principle that "chastity and purity" are basic virtues. Unlike the apostle he says of virginity only that it is "a virtue /

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1 op. cit.

2 The ninth Sermon in the 1562 edition, C.R. LIV 334 ff.

3 ibid 665, "Caeterum hinc perspicitur diabolica papae superbia, qui novos excogitando propinquitatis gradus, supra Deum sapere voluit. Astutia quoque eius se prodit, quod ex hoc genere aucupii uberem fecit quaestum."

4 ibid. 657.

5 ibid. "Vulgo dicitur, iura naturae insolubilia esse; atque semel pronunciavit Deus . . . "

6 INST. 2: 8: 41-2.

virtue not to be despised". Of marriage he says it is necessary because of "natural feeling and the passions inflamed by the Fall".[1] "As the law under which man was created was not to lead a life of solitude, but enjoy a help meet for him, and ever since he fell under the curse the necessity for this mode of life is increased; the Lord made the requisite provision for us . . . "[2]

Marriage on this showing is a permission rather than an ordination, a prevention of sin rather than a return to innocence. One feels that Calvin would have preferred the Pauline injunction to virginity had virginity not acquired a spurious virtue by its association with priesthood.[3] For exactly the same reason, namely the claim of the pope to make and unmake marriages, Calvin is chary of divorce, and it is laid down in the "Ordonnances" that marriages must be maintained even at the cost of some trouble on the part of the authorities.[4] The question is still too far from resolution for judgment to be passed upon Calvin. He did not think of marriages as made in heaven in the sense that they might have been in Eden; in other words he would not have supported the idea of marriage as an ordinance of nature, because human marriage itself in its greatest purity is a sign of our human sin.[5] At the same time marriage, if an expedient, is not simply a human /

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1 Ibid. Cf. C.R. LIV, 342. " . . . il y a le remede de mariage pour ceux qui ne peuvent abstenir."

2 Ibid.

3 At the end of the Sermon he says the Pauline injunction emphasises the freedom of widows, etc. to serve God. [C.R. LIV, 345-6.] His emphasis, however, is that in marriage we serve God with body as well as with soul.

4 C.R. XXXVIII a 42 ff. The Council worked in close conjunction with the Consistory in these matters.

5 "La couverture du Mariage est pour sanctifier ce qui est pollu et prophane". [C.R. LIV, 343].

human expedient; it is of God and thus must be entered advisedly.[1] "Purity and chastity" is God's command for us, and marriage is a means in present circumstances to that end; and of course, even in the marriage chamber there must be "dignity and temperance".[2]

Calvin's shortness on the subject of divorce can be traced to his interpretation of the term.[3] The "bill of divorcement"[4] mentioned by Moses was given at the mere pleasure of the husband. The repudiation of divorce is thus an expression, often repeated, of the rights of the individual person, particularly women, to consideration as persons. In the Old Testament there was no case of divorce on the grounds of adultery,[5] because adultery was a criminal offence, the punishment of which was death. The spouse of an adulterous person would in the course of law become widowed, and thus free to marry.[6] If a case for divorce is to be built therefore it would have to be upon the emphasis which is given to the individual woman who is to be protected against flippancy. Bucer developed this argument on the grounds that the Church laid down as a sacrament what was a contract made directly under God.[7] Calvin, however, does /

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1 INST. 2: 8: 43. "puritatem . . . et pudicitiam a nobis requirit."

2 INST. 2: 8: 44 " . . . sic agentes (the Christian man and wife) ne quid omnino indignum honestate ac temperantia matrimonii admittant."

3 C.R. LII, 657 - 8.

4 DEUT. XXIV, 1, 3 : ST. MARK X, 4 and parallels.

5 LEV. XX,10. The question arises how far the prophetic references to adultery were to spiritual adultery, to ritual adultery, to a disregard of the Law, or to a loose use of the term to include fornication in general.

6 Calvin argued that the dismissal by Christ of the adultress - like His refusal to be made king, was part of His own office as Redeemer. Adultery cannot be forgiven by men and it is ridiculous for those "divinitus gladio . . . armati ad punienda scelera" to deny this power or its responsibility. C.R. LII, 649.

7 But even for Bucer adultery was a capital offence.

does not consider that a woman even if caught in the toils of a tyrannous husband, should be allowed her freedom to re-marry. "There was no means for her release" he says, because "it was neither just nor right to overthrow God's earliest institution".[1]

It is significant that in the eighth commandment - concerning property - Calvin uses the very term which he seems to withhold in discussing marriage, "Injustice being an abomination to God, we must render to every man his due".[2] Marriage was not a contract involving justice so much as an institution of God; it concerned therefore the honour of God more than the rights of man and woman. As he states the problem it is almost part of the first rather than of the second table. But he brings into the consideration of contract an instance of sexual relationship, namely the position of the woman captured in war, dishonoured but not married. On the principle of none defrauding another she is to go free, "for although chastity is a special treasure, yet liberty . . . was no trifling consolation".[3] The example may not be typical enough to build an entire case upon it, but it is an admission that the woman has interests that may be different from that of her relationship to man; and this is the basis /

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1 C.R. LII, 657 "nulla eius liberandae, esset ratio". He does emphasise, however, "la foy et la loyauté mutuelle qui doit estre entre le mari et la femme," which derives from the worth of persons in God's sight. That is, Calvin raises the status of woman in the marriage bond. The practical end of his strictures on divorce is to protect her. - C.R. LIV, 336.

2 INST. 2: 8: 45. It seems almost as if Calvin thought of the relationship between human personalities as one kind of "equité" - i.e. equal as the image of God and equal as under sin, and the mutual relationships to property as another. Of the first born's rights, he says they are inviolable since to arrogate the right away (except for a recognised misdeed) is to take to oneself the right of creation. (C.R. LII, 709).

3 C.R. LII, 709 "libertas tamen . . . . solatii non vulgaris loco fuit."

basis of any justification of divorce.

In the main argument Calvin discloses his affinity to commercial interests. At a stroke he states the case for private enterprise. "In substance . . . the commandment forbids us to long after other men's goods, and accordingly, requires every man to exert himself honestly in preserving his own".[1] Calvin emphasises the Biblical requirement of mercy and the most scrupulous honesty in the conduct of business. Theft can be spiritual as well as material, and can be directed against man. Prosperity, on the other hand, cannot rightly be sought by the individual at the expense of the body politic. "Since all men are born for the sake of each other, human society is not properly maintained, except by an interchange of good offices".[2] But a man has certain rights which no other person can withhold. For example, the right of primogeniture cannot be set aside by the father unless he "arrogates to himself the ability to create", which belongs to God alone.[3] Then the purchaser of a new house has the right to enjoy it even at the cost to the nation of his absence in war.[4] Finally, a man has the right to be succeeded by children.[5]

It is in the question of usury, however, that Calvin states the case for /

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1, INST. 2: 8: 45. In the Sermons - number ten in the 1562 edition - he uses the phrase "equité naturelle" - C.R. LIV, 349.

2 C.R. LII, 679. ". . . omnes hominum causa geniti sint, non recte coli vitae communitatem, nisi inter se officia conferant."

3 C.R. LII, 679. Calvin says this view was held also by "profani scriptores" but is not a full statement of the Divine Will, which is not a negation but an assertion "Pars enim institiae est liberalitas". Later on, Calvin says further - in connection with the quadruple repayment of stolen goods - that though it may seem burdensome, "what God awards, a man has the best of rights to". Ibid., 690.

4 Ibid., 710.

5 Ibid., 712.

for the individual best; not however that he is a willing advocate. "I should indeed be unwilling to take usury under my patronage, and I wish the name itself were banished from the world; but I do not dare to pronounce upon so important a point more than God's words convey".[1] The authority to which in fact he does appeal is rather the "law of equity". Basically usury is justified on the necessity of business. It is thus forbidden between rich and poor, and forbidden as a trade; it is allowed between rich man and rich man.[2]

Behind Calvin's discussion of usury lies the whole economic movement of the age in which he lived. During the fifteenth century the old encircled Europe was gathering its powers to break out of its prison. "The Discoveries", says Professor Tawney,[3] "were neither a happy accident nor the fruit of the disinterested curiosity of science. They were the climax of almost a century of patient economic effort. They were as practical in their motive as the steam engine"; as practical, as material or as selfish. The thirst for gold, for example, could not be satisfied by the exploitation of the Tyrol projects; Portugal and Spain ranged South, east and west, to find ways round the Turkish net to the alleged riches of the east; and when they found other sources of bullion, the less favoured states preyed upon their lines of trade. Meantime, at the other /

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1 Ibid., 682-3. "Nolim quidem meo patrocinio usuras fovere, atque utinam nomen ipsum abolitum esset e mundo: sed non audeo de re magni momenti plus pronunciare quam Dei verba sonant."

2 In the Sermon, he says, speaking of fraud, "Mais tant y a qu'il appert par cest acte, que nous n'avons nulle charité, que nous sommes comme bestes sauvages: que bref nous ne sommes pas dignes d'estre reputez hommes." C.R. LIV, 351. Usury outside the limits he laid down was a kind of fraud.

3 Op. cit., 76.

other extremity of society, the same ruthless spirit of enterprise prevailed.[1] "It was not the lords of great estates, but eager and prosperous peasants who in England first nibbled at commons and undermined the manorial system . . . It was not great capitalists, but enterprising guildsmen who began to make the control of the fraternity the basis of plutocratic extortion, or who fled, precocious individualists, from the fellowship of borough and craft, that they might grow to what stature they pleased in rural isolation". The Reformation accompanied and perhaps accommodated the new capitalism, but did not create it.

The issue was particularly acute in Geneva.[2] "Credit was an issue of moment at Geneva, nor merely for the same reasons that made it a burning question everywhere to the small producer of the sixteenth century, but because especially after the fall of Lyons in the French wars of religion the city was a financial centre of some importance". For political reasons also Geneva was interested in credit. Placed as she was almost in France, and yet looking to the Swiss way of life, she was threatened constantly by wars designed to engulf her. Thus she borrowed money from her Protestant neighbours, Basel and Berne, for example. This money was regarded by the lenders as a loan to be repaid, not as an investment against foreign encroachment of the cantons; thus Geneva had to administer it as a public debt. The city council redistributed it by advances to or exchange business with, private individuals at a fixed rate of interest, first 10% and later 12%. The ministers of /

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[1] Ibid., 75.
[2] Ibid., 118 ff.

of the city raised no objection to this method of directing privately owned means into the public cause; what they did lay down was the distinction between those who put their money to merchants for the purpose of merchandise and those who simply wanted to raise ready cash, whether because of poverty, extravagance or ambitious speculation. The Reform movement as such was set against all forms of irresponsibility, whether the professional beggary that had thrived upon medieval charity or the speculation of the professional lender who could afford to hold merchandise and cash till the price should suit their choice.

The problem for this study is not Calvin's standing as an economist, but his ability to rest this doctrine of money trading upon the Law which he admits repudiates the principle of usury. He goes back to the principle of Divine distribution. "What each individual possesses has not fallen to him by chance, but by the distribution of the sovereign Lord of all".[1] Thus on the one hand theft is a crime against God as well as man, since it violates the divine distribution; but "perversion to bad purpose" of one's own goods is equally fraud against the divine dispensation. Calvin as an economist, Tawney thinks, would have preferred a "collectivist dictatorship" to purely individualist system; in religious terms, Calvin regarded each one as a steward of God's gifts. Christian statesmanship is thus to be based not upon a distinction of classes, the one professing poverty as a holy virtue, the other permitted to /

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[1] INST. 2: 8: 45. "Sic enim cogitandum est unicuique evenisse quod possidet, non fortuita sorte, sed ex distributione summi rerum omnium Domini: non posse igitur praeverti malis artibus facultates cuiuspiam, quin fraus divinae despensationi fiat."

to amass wealth by all permitted means; the distinction was to be between those who were granted and those who were not granted stewardship of material wealth. All were subject to sumptuary laws designed to limit expenditure along undesirable lines, and at the same time all were encouraged to practise such gifts as were given them. Only in the last place was charity - in the sense of direct subsidy, to be given. The resulting pattern of society stressed economic independence, at least of help from strangers. Perhaps it was rather harsh upon poverty, casting upon it the stigma of crime rather than the pity of misfortune; but the fact that such a stigma did attach points to the fact that in this kind of society reasonable energy did achieve reasonable reward.

The fundamental law which Calvin stresses is thus that of "equity" in the stewardship of property as in the stewardship of marriage or the stewardship of life itself. When he is accused of setting aside the judicial expression of the law in its Jewish code, it ought not to be forgotten that he set aside also Old Testament instances of marriage, for example bigamy and divorce, and instances of slaughter, for example, the liquidation of the Amelekites, as particular expressions of God's Will for His particular people, not to be repeated in Christian society. But they are abrogated not so much by the new revelation in Christ as merely by the change of circumstances of God's new people.[1] The basis of their authority is thus to be sought not in another general law such as "natural" law, but in the further manifestation of God's Holy Spirit to His /

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[1] "Although the political laws of Moses are not now in operation, "yet certain analogies remain" lest the condition of those who have been redeemed by Christ's blood should be worse among us, than that of old of His ancient people." C.R. LII, 704.

His people. In other words, the Decalogue is a body of principle of which not all the expressions even in Scripture are applicable to the new Israel. The ceremonial is altogether relevant to salvation but is fulfilled and thus abrogated in use, in Christ. The judicial expression is abrogated in a different way, namely, by the change of circumstance, and thus by the permission of the Holy Spirit. God's Law remains a divine principle of conduct, but He may direct in particular instances different details of obedience.

The last two commandments - not to bear false witness and not to covet - for practical reasons may be discussed together. Calvin says little about them in both his main treatments of the Law.[1] They form a third part of the Law. The first table represented the divine sanction of the principles to be laid down; the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth commandments discussed the three basis conditions of human existence life, family and property; and now the final commandments lay down the inner obedience that is to accompany outward conformity. Calvin's idea of society was of a free community of consenting parties, where consent sprang from a common acknowledgment of the supreme God known in Jesus Christ.[2] It was not a grouping designed to satisfy the expediencies of trade /

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[1] But more in the Sermons. Sermon number eleven deals with the ninth and sermon twelve with the tenth. The remainder deal with the remaining verses of DEUT. Chapter V and the first of Chapter VI. But of course in Sermons there was greater scope for emphasising the spiritual aspect of personal obedience.

[2] Speaking of the Law," . . . la Loy n'estoit point une chose forgee des hommes, mais que Dieu en estoit lautheur," he goes on: "Ce mot donc se doit ainsi prendre: Nous avons cogneu auiourd'huy que Dieu a parlé aux hommes . . . " (C.R. LIV, 402). Elsewhere he said, "... Dieu demande des services volontiers, il ne veut pas seulement que nous le servions par une crainte servile: mais il veut que nous y venions d'un courage franc, et alegre, que mesure nous prenions plaisir à l'honorer". [Ibid. 266].

trade or even security, but to fulfil the purpose of the Almighty in the particular conditions of sixteenth century Geneva. Christian society was holy if neither Roman nor at that time imperial. Because it was holy it required discipline; discipline particularly in its own behaviour since human nature cannot obey the divine Will rightly without constant vigilance and constant refreshment by grace, and discipline also towards those who were growing up into full membership or who threatened its existence from without.

The final commandments thus touch the motives of human action. The Law points to the necessity of charity, but human nature is subject to evilinsinuations which derive from its concupiscent selfishness. Hence arise calumnies based either upon truth or falsehood. In terms of human rights these commandments may be summed up in the statement that "whatever each individual possesses remains entire and secure, not only from injury or the wish to injure but also from the slightest feeling of covetousness which can spring up in the mind."[1] Justice in other words includes not only the preservation of life, home and goods, but also the acknowledgment of the right to such ownership. In the good sense of the phrase the citizen of Calvin's state lived in public. If any question arose about his reputation it was not for him as an individual person to discuss and settle it. Officers had been appointed in Church and state to deal with it according to the over-ruling justice /

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[1] INST. ": 8: 50. ". . . quod possidet quisque, maneat salvum et intactum, non modo ab iniuria aut libidine fraudandi, sed a minima etiam cupiditate quae animos sollicitet."

justice of God.

(iv) The Adequacy of the Decalogue.

The concluding paragraphs of this chapter - and in a sense they are the concluding paragraphs of the whole essay - inevitably raise the direct question whether the Decalogue has been found an adequate basis of Christian ethics. There can be little doubt that Calvin thought it to be so, and for the best of reasons, namely that his Christian philosophy demanded a basis in revelation and revelation alone: that is to say, in the active Self-revelation of God in Scripture.[1]

To review the main argument briefly: the ethics of a Christian man must adequately account for two factors - the revelation of God in his soul, and the eternal categories of creation and justice. In short, what he does is right primarily because God bids him do it,[2] but also because it is eternally right, - right, that is to say, for all men in all generations.[3] Thus, using Chenevière's phrase, Calvin's natural law was built upon the will or conscience, not upon the intellect or reason. The world of external experience was /

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1 Chenevière, op. cit., pp. 126 ff.

2 So Chenevière, op. cit., p. 80 - "La volonté de Dieu nous est donnée par le Décalogue à l'exclusion de toute source humaine de connaissance; le Décalogue remplace donc practiquement la conscience, au moins pour le chrétien."

3 Ibid., p. 109. "Pour Calvin, Dieu est a la fois le Créateur de l'ordre de nature originel . . . et le Créateur de la loi naturelle: cette loi était perçue a l'origine par tous les hommes au moyen de la conscience (et non de la raison), et exprimait intérieurement a chaque individu ce que l'ordre de nature exprimait extérieurement, c'est-à-dire, la volonté de Dieu."

was not a sort of quarry from which the prying mind might hew the substance of an adequate philosophy. Indeed, Calvin condemns overmuch curiosity.[1] There is a place in Christian faith for agnosticism.[2] For the true knowledge of God there is necessary "une sorte de schéma",[3] to which the moral and intellectual experience may give body but which is essentially the key to the right understanding of the world. And this schéma is revealed. In fact, it is the Decalogue. For the Christian man there are many channels of divine grace - through Church, state and family, for example - but these are channels: that is to say, they are ordinances of God recognised as such because the man is a Christian. They are ordinances for the non-Christian too, as the Christian knows, and as the non-Christian ought to know. But because the non-Christian is such, it cannot be assumed that in fact he does know or acknowledge the voice of God in him. He has thus no fixed point for a sane view of life.

No doubt the Calvinist argument has its flaws. Some of them have been noted in passing - the inadequate consideration, for example, of the distinctive qualities of the spiritual man. There are others: the apparent isolation of the doctrine of predestination from the fact of the Incarnation, for example.[4] Then there /

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1 Sermons, C.R. LIV, 236 - "cette curiosité diabolique a regné de tout temps au monde."

2 Ibid, 263, "It est vray que la premiere cause nous est incogneue, et ne s'en faut point enquerir."

3 Chenevière, op. cit., 86.

4 Barth, "Gotteserkenntnis und Gottesdienst" (1938), p. 192.

there has been noted a dangerous tendency towards economic hypocrisy. But the contribution of Calvin to the ethical issue does not depend entirely upon his solving all the questions at issue.[1] Even in his system there has been found something of the dynamic of the Holy Spirit. That is to say, the Spirit may guide us in each generation into the wisdom that can appreciate the combination of circumstances peculiar to that time and place. Calvin was not one to demand a rigid view of revelation as confined to one particular historical manifestation, even if that manifestation should be the Scriptures. On the other hand, he was not so sentimental as to suppose that the Holy Spirit should communicate to any human mind some entirely new ethical or metaphysical categories.[2] The New Israel is not so distinguished from the old. Somehow what is relevant now must be found to have been essentially relevant to the Fathers of the old dispensation.

Does Christ then make no difference? Ethically, none.[3] Christ came to fulfil the Law, not to destroy it. His work is to bring /

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[1] A point noted by Chenevière (op. cit., p. 86) - " . . . dire que le Décalogue enseigne la parfaite justice ne signifie pas que le Décalogue l'enseigne dans tous ses détails."

[2] e.g. Sermon 14 in the 1562 edition (C.R. LIV, 397) which deals largely with preaching. Calvin speaks of God's "(accommodation) a nostre petitesse" in revealing what is "propre et utile", but, he adds, "c'est un appetit fit et desbordé, si nous demandons qu'il nous apparoisse du ciel, au qu'il face quelque miracle visible."

[3] INST., 2: 8: 7. Christ did not add to the Law. He "only restored it to its integrity by maintaining and purifying it . . . ." The Law is thus itself Evangelical. It is the motive, not the substance of obedience, that distinguishes the elect from the reprobate.

bring sinners to the grace to which the Law was designed to bring them. It is not the Law which Christ overcomes, but the sin of man. It is thus a redeeming, not a legislative, work. And thus, Calvin argues, for us it is not a question of the doing what Jesus would do. Jesus gave no new law, even about divorce, because the Old Testament law of divorce was essentially contrary to the Spirit of the Law of God, permitted because of the blindness of the people, not actively enjoined. What Jesus may be said to have done and in His Spirit still to do for spiritual men is so to redeem their will that they may perceive the rightness of the Law, and perceiving their human incapacity for obedience take the gracious salvation which God offers. This grace is God's: that is to say, it was historically being offered before the advent of Christ into history. It is the essential spirit of the Covenants. But of course Christ was eternally in the Covenants as He was eternally in the Law, so that the Christian believer, though not permitted the sentimentality of a private revelation or the assumption that his virtue before men can in any sense be an imitation of Christ, nevertheless is urged on by the terrible necessity of a perpetual obedience demanded by an eternal God.

There is undoubtedly the danger in this manner of thinking, of falling into legalism and moralism.[1] The individual plays too little a part in Calvin's thought. Not that the individual is ignored. Evidence has been given of his appeal to individuals and no one could have ministered to exiles for conscience' sake without /

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[1] Niebuhr, "Human Destiny", pp. 205 ff.

without seeing them as individuals called of God to high endeavour. But perhaps Calvin was too much preoccupied with the fathers who had dared all to consider the children who would grow up into a changing set of circumstances. As Niebuhr remarks, there seemed to be no safe passage between the Scylla of Lutheran supramoralism and the Charybdis of Calvinist moralism. If the path of the one led to pietism, therefore, that of the other led to a self-contained obscurantism - the obscurantism of the Puritan commercial house which was economically secure, or the obscurantism of Scottish poverty which sustained itself with national pride. To some extent this obscurantism remains into modern Protestantism. Barth's preaching is itself self-confessed evidence. The world seems to be addressed almost impersonally. Missionary zeal requires something of the "enthusiasm" that comes to men and women from a belief in the direct command and personal interest of their Leader.[1] The strange warmth of John Wesley and the determination of William Carey were opposed by the orthodox and were in a sense born in the men themselves despite their orthodoxy.

Perhaps at this point of history one is tempted to criticise Calvin and the Reformers overmuch for the sense of failure which the collapse of our Western civilisation has brought. It is easy to forget that the period of collapse is not yet fifty years old, and /

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[1] So that Niebuhr concludes . . "it is not surprising that possibly even greater contributions towards higher justice in recent centuries were derived from the sectarianism and various Renaissance movements" (than from Calvinism)" ibid., p. 210.

and that the stamp of the Reformation remained upon Europe for three hundred years. To say so is not to suggest that a strict return to Calvin's doctrines will solve all our problems. But it does indicate the possibility that one might underestimate his social and religious stature. And it is significant that in the present collapse there are many pathetic appeals for a return to a Church and a social order built upon the Ten Commandments. The Decalogue has not been entirely ignored all these centuries, but as has been said earlier on, the tendency has been to make it a catechetical exercise rather than a politically vital force. The cycle observed in the earlier chapters has come round again, and, as Calvin said, men are seeking a moral standard which will apply to all classes and creeds, and not be simply imposed upon the allegedly ignorant laity.[1] His reference to the supra-moral clergy could aptly be transferred to contemporary party-leaders. Justice, in short, is the cry, an eternal justice that is beyond the mere will of man.

If, therefore, one concludes that Calvin suffered from both "obscurantism and pretension",[2] it is a conclusion which refers to his attempt to particularise the will of God into forms of social obedience - to fix Christian obedience - rather than his strength of understanding of the faith. It is, in short, a criticism of the man rather than of his Gospel; a criticism of his positive laws rather than of his emphasis upon the Divine Law. It is, alas /

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[1] Sermons. C.R. LIV, 385.
[2] Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 210.

alas, the fault of all men, particularly when they are filled with zeal, to imagine that they cannot be wrong. With Moses, Calvin has to pass into the mountain before he reaches the Promised Land. But his law is carried forward.

# CHAPTER VII.

## "The Wider Issue".

(i) Bucer's "De Regno Christi" 1550.

(ii) Calvinism and Monarchomachism.

(i) Bucer's "De Regno Christi".

No discussion designed to cover the thought of the Reformers could omit Martin Bucer. If Luther, Zwingli and Calvin are the chief names, with Melanchthon or Farel of almost equal importance, Bucer is becoming increasingly recognised[1] as an influence which in Strasburg bridged the gulfs between Lutheranism and Zwingliism, and between these and Calvinism. And in England he established, in his last years, an influence of his own.

Bucer belongs to the period of Reform itself. He was in Strasburg from May 1523 till April 1549.[2] One need only recall the events of those years, many of which took place in Strasburg, to realise the strategic importance of his presence. The extension first of Luther from Germany and then of Zwingli from Zurich inevitably met in this frontier town, and, Strasburg being a refuge of exiles, encountered conflicting doctrines held by ardent exponents. There were many Anabaptists in Strasburg, for instance.[3] Thus the doctrines which have been called "Reformed" had, in Strasburg, to accommodate themselves to one another, and find their common denominator, and also to express their common distinction from Romanism on the one hand and Anabaptism on the other. Thus in Strasburg much of the liturgical and theological distinction of Reform was beaten out,[4] and also much of their conservatism. /

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1 Prof. August Lang, article "Martin Bucer" in Evangelical Quarterly, April 1929, pp. 159-166.

2 Constantin Hopf, "Martin Bucer" (1946), pp. 1 ff.

3 Doumergue, article "Calvin - Creator or Epigone" - in "Calvin and the Reformation", p. 23.

4 Bohatec, op. cit., p. 460 ff, 507 ff shows, for example, how the lay emphasis in Church government characteristic of Reformed "faith" was worked out in Strasburg.

conservatism.[1] Finally, as a haven for refugees, Strasburg sheltered such leading exponents and missionaries of the new ideas as Farel and Calvin. And all these happenings and influences occurred while Bucer was living in the city, and while he was at the prime of his manhood.[2] When he left for England he was at the full maturity and the "De Regno Christi" is thus the ripest plum on the tree of his experience.

Bucer, according to Wilhelm Pauck, was Calvin's "foremost teacher";[3] not, he adds, that Bucer's was an original mind: rather, it was a mind "rich in many suggestive ideas which in their full scope remained unrealised . . . forgotten and left to emerge in the minds of later generations under new conditions." One example of this suggestive influence may be found in the teaching about predestination which he passed on to Calvin.[4] As has already been pointed out, the "Institutes" itself illustrate the hardening of the doctrine in editions subsequent to his exile in Strasburg and increasingly throughout his stay in Geneva.[5] In this sense, Lang can say that Bucer was "the spiritual father of the Genevan theologian."[6] The reason for this influence may be traced to /

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1 Ibid., pp. 434 ff. For example, Calvin's rejection of direct assurance of salvation. Ibid., pp. 339 ff shows a similar conservatism in the doctrine of communion, and for a similar reason.

2 Born 1491; that is, he was 30 when he first settled in Strasburg, and 56 when he left for England. He was 58 when he died.

3 Wilhelm Pauck, "Luther and Butzer", Journal of Religion, Vol. IX, pp. 85 ff.

4 Bohatec, op. cit., 732-3 gives other examples. He says that Calvin derived his economic principles, equity and charity, from Bucer's treatise on usury, and also much of his political theory of church and state.

5 One of his later writings was a treatise on the subject, - the "De Praedestinatione et Providentia Dei" (1550), written in defence of his doctrine of Christian ethics. Much criticism of the system, even then centred upon this doctrine, e.g. the "Demandes et repliques à J. C. sur son livre de la Predestination" (1561).

6 op. cit. Bohatec develops this view strongly in his treatment of Calvin. Examples have been given in previous notes.

to an ethical source. Calvin, in practice, had to find an explanation for human responsibility towards the divinely revealed Law, while denying that mere intelligence could bring one to a saving knowledge of God. In other words, he had to f i n d a just reason for condemning persons who might deny the justice of God. He found it in the doctrine of predestination. By God's free election some are brought to an acknowledgment of Him and some are not. Nevertheless all, as His Creatures, owe Him obedience. And therefore, His Church has the duty not only to discipline its own members, who are presumably willing to accept it, but also to influence those who are not members, whether the offspring of members or those who stood outside the Church for other reasons. In short, the Church, by her guardianship of the divine Word, was bound to claim educational and legislative powers in the State.

These ideas are abundantly evident in Bucer. He and Calvin, Lang says,[1] formulated the doctrine of the Headship of Christ in identical terms. Originally it was peculiar to them; and only later was taken up by other Reformers. But Bucer's doctrine was carried further than Calvin's. If Luther remained conservatively at a view of the Kingdom as equivalent to the church invisible,[2] that is to say, at a religious view, Bucer was socially even more revolutionary than Calvin. The Gospel is almost moralised. It is true that he limits the actual Kingdom to individual believers, but the emphasis of belief is the duty to /

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1 Ibid.

2 Scott Pearson, op. cit, p. 3, says Luther was "not a politician by choice but by force of circumstances."

to work out his obedience in the world.[1] In one sense it is a missionary ideal.[2] In another sense it is a revolutionary ideal, since it cannot be restricted to the circle of believers itself. It is never fulfilled until it permeates the totality of human conditions. If for Luther the Church can remain the Church even if the prince should happen not to be a Christian, for Bucer it is the prime business of a Christian prince to forward Christian reform, where "Christian" implies the imposition of religious duties which individuals might not accept.

Theologically, Bucer appears more ethical than religious in his emphasis. As Anrich points out,[3] Jehovah, the revealed God of the old covenant, is closely identified with the Christ, particularly in the sense that the Law of God, not only in its ceremonial but also in its ethical aspects, is to be resolved in Him. It is true that the Law is not allowed to be merely law: it is a law of love, and of the political laws implied by the divine Law, Bucer held that they must also conform to the Biblical law of love.[4] But the Gospel can be, and ought to be, a "rule of political laws" so that "religion and its moral expression" becomes a law. The result is "a politically or an ecclesiastically controlled theocracy."[5]

Bucer's /

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1 Pauck, op. cit.

2 Lang, op. cit.

3 Gustav Anrich, "Martin Bucer", (1914).

4 Pauck, op. cit.

5 Ibid.

Bucer's famous phrase is that in the Christian state men are to live well and happily, here and hereafter.[1] In this latter phrase is the step beyond Calvin. Calvin's discipline seemed to point only to a consummation of happiness hereafter.[2] The reason may have been distrust of his contemporaries, one might even say, a nearer contact with flesh and blood conditions than Bucer ever had, but the result was on the one hand a cramping of specific Gospel tendencies such as spiritual joy in salvation, and on the other, a rather mean application of the conception of prosperity, which could, and did, lead to rank hypocrisy. Bucer, much more openly than Calvin, preached the "rightness" of the Christian state as such, and therefore appealed to believers to go out and, in their own way, work for the reform of the present conditions. True religion and true ethics are equally Biblical. Thus the personalities of the Kingdom (the individuals who have given their assent to God's call) must take up the leading influence in the state, exerting not only their Christian influence but also their technical expert knowledge, to this end.[3] "Vera theologica non theoretica, sed practica est. Finis siquidem eius agere est: hoc est vitam vivere /

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1 "De Regno Christi" I, para. v.

2 He did not, of course, despise present prosperity. It was, indeed, of God. But because it was of God, it was fortuitous. Calvin's social reforms were a means to the end of saving souls, not an expression of the Divine Will as in itself a desirable end. Thus, though Calvin spoke of charity to one's neighbour, it was a loveless sort of charity, even a selfish charity which excluded unbelievers. The idea of serving all men for Christ's sake is not characteristic of Calvin. His eyes were always beyond this life.

3 Pauck, "Martin Bucer's conception of the Christian State", Princeton Theological Review, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 80-9.

vivere deiformum."[1]

Bucer came to England in April 1549. Cranmer had invited him the previous year, partly because of the Schmalkaldic wars and the general persecuting policy of France, and partly because of his desire for the advice of so eminent a Reformer on the morning of the thorough Reformation of England. Bucer's final decision to come was made presumably because of Margaret of Navarre's death, which removed the strongest protection of Reform in France. He never returned to Strasburg. He died in England in 1551,[2] and his secretary took his papers to Basel.

In England, Bucer's field of reform was almost unlimited. The young king was himself a Reformer - so much so that he himself worked out a plan of reform on the basis of Bucer's contribution,[3] without however, either publishing or paying for the original - and the field of his reform was a nation, not a city. Bucer was not, of course, the only political reformer of the age. England had already the saintly More and his famous "Utopia". But Bucer was at the same time more complete and consistent in his social plans, and, as the respective titles of their works themselves illustrate, more specifically Christian and therefore more realistic in his outlook upon the problems to be solved. The "De Regno Christi" was, in fact, an "outline of Christian politics";[4] and the word "politics" here expresses both the energy /

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1 Bucer, "Quatuor Evangelii" (1536).

2 J. R. Green, "History of the English People", p. 361, says that Mary caused his bones to be burned.

3 The "Discourse on the Reformation of Abuses".

4 Baum, "Capito and Butzer".

energy of the reformer who is prepared to change and the conservatism of the realist who will not risk the whole by forcing unnecessary or premature changes upon the existing fabric of society. The Kingdom was a vital centre with an ever increasing perimeter; and it remained the centre. The surrounding community of the state - the "natural" state - was accepted as the sphere to be permeated in the course of the Kingdom's growth.

Mention has already been made of Bucer's almost complete eclipse. His own and King Edward's deaths left the work "De Regno Christi" quite isolated from practical expression. Mary, of course, attempted a complete sweep of all things Protestant, and when Elizabeth finally made her settlement she did so on a political rather than a social basis. Bucer's influence did not return until the Puritans became sufficiently co-ordinated to put forward the views on Church and State which had been thoroughly discouraged and even confused by the overriding political crisis of Elizabeth's reign. Thus in the 17th century Bucer's influence affected the thought of the Puritans who in New England sought to express the Headship of Christ without the interference of the State and in the Mother country sought to reform both Church and State from within.[1] Translations were made of the sections from the "De Regno Christi" concerning relief of the poor and (by Milton[2]) concerning divorce. Bishop /

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1 Lang, op. cit.

2 "The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce" (London, 1644).

Bishop Ussher's quotation of Bucer's "De vi et usu sacri ministerii"(1550) in the often re-published pamphlet "The Originall of Bishops and Metropolitans" has also been mentioned. Finally, Jeremy Collier, in his enormous "Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, chiefly of England", (1714) devotes seventeen pages of Book IV, Part II, to Bucer himself, including some three pages to an analysis of the "De Regno Christi" itself. The century was by then already turning to the rationalism of Bishop Butler and Professor Hutchison, and the characteristically religious teaching of Bucer suffered a second eclipse which is only beginning to pass in very recent years.

In analysing the "De Regno Christi" one perceives that its two books concern the first and the second tables of the Law. Bucer does not, however, follow out the somewhat elementary plan of Calvin to deduce a pattern of social life from the precepts of the Old Testament. He has taken a third step in the progress of Reformed ethics. Luther dismissed the Decalogue as a kind of Jewish Sachsenspiegel; that is, he left secular laws to the prince and sought an inspirational perfectionism in the Church. Calvin repudiated the ideas both of the alleged divine sovereignty of the State and also of the suggestion of perfectionism in the Church. For him the Decalogue was, and must be, the sole means of interpreting the divine will on earth in individual or in social life. But Calvin seems to want to check every detail of the social programme against a parallel instance in the Old Testament.[1]

Even /

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[1] A point made by Niebuhr, "Human Destiny", pp. 209 ff.

Even on his own views that could not always be done, since the precepts of the Old Testament were God's interpretation of the Decalogue for the Old Testament - God's "political" laws for the Old Testament circumstances - and by His Spirit He might have other interpretations for other times. Thus Bucer, while retaining the Bible as a strictly necessary reference for principle, launches out more boldly than Calvin into the task of interpreting the state of the nation. That he never forgot the ultimate source of principle is illustrated, however, by a remark by Jeremy Collier that Bucer desired the State to exact the death penalty for all the offences which the Mosaic law condemned as capital.

In the first book, consisting of fifteen paragraphs, Bucer begins by discussing the title of his work.[1] It is to be about the Regnum Christi rather than the Regnum Dei because it is to Christ that we look for our knowledge of God and His saving grace. It is not, he goes on, so much a question of the "Kingdom" of Christ, anyhow, as a question of His King-ship in the hearts of men. The idea that there can or ought to be, such a theocratic institution, with an Invisible Person assuming legislative duties which can be carried out by a human person, is simply ridiculous. It is the duty of Christian kings to direct the citizens of the realm to piety. Illustrations of this duty and honour are /

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1 Reg. Chr. I, (i). The references are to the Book and the paragraph.

are quoted from ISAIAH.

The next paragraphs[1] discuss the Kingdom itself. After saying something about the history of the Church, Bucer lays down his principle of the Church's business - "the administration and superintendence (procuratio) of the eternal salvation of God's elect, by which He, our Lord Himself, and the King of heaven, gathers to Himself by His teaching and discipline, through the agency of suitable ministers of (His) administration, selected for the purpose, His elect ones (whom He has throughout the world, and wishes to be subject in no way to the powers of the world), and incorporates in Himself and His Church and moreover governs in it in such a way that they are daily cleansed of all sins, and live well and happily both here and hereafter." Several paragraphs[2] enlarge upon details of this ambitious programme. Doctrine is restricted to the holy Scriptures, to which nothing may be added and from which nothing may be taken away, but the methods of teaching these fundamentals may and must be varied, adapted indeed to every occasion. Bucer then discusses the sacraments,[3] (which he limits, of course, to baptism and the Lord's Supper), discipline of life and manners,[4] with a special /

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1 I (iv ff).
I (v).
"Regnum Servatoris nostri Jesus Christi administratio est et procuratio salutio aeternae electorum Dei, qua luci ipse Dominus noster, et Rex caelorum, doctrina et disciplina sua, per idoneos, et ab ipso delectos ad hoc ipsum ministros administrates, electos suos (quos habet in mundo dispersos, et vult nihilominus mundi potestatibus esse subjectos) colligit ad se, sibique et Ecclesiae sua incorporat, atque in ea sic gubernat, ut purgati in dies plenies peccatis, bene beateque vivant et hic et in futuro."

2 I yi - xiii.

3 I, vii.

4 I, viii - ix.

special paragraph upon penitential discipline, ceremonies such as sanctification of Churches,[1] holy occasions such as the Sabbath,[2] the keeping of Lent and other fasts[3] - about all of which he is much less rigid than Calvin. To him there is a need for moderating ceremonies and developing the Church's responsibility to physical need, wherever it may be found; for the Church's responsibility extends to all men.[4]

The second book elaborates the principles outlined in the first. It opens with a discussion how Christian Kings can set up the Kingdom here on earth.[5] He must first draw about him Christian counsellors, that is to say, men who are not only statesmen but professing Christians. Then he must set about persuading his subjects to acquiesce in his Christian laws and ordinances. For this purpose it is obviously necessary to provide spiritual instruction to all parts of the realm. Thus he has a programme of preaching, education and particularly education for the ministry.

Behind this general plan there lies the detail of the right laws.[6] Bucer discusses the structure of the state from the elementary unit of the family.[7] In the home the first training in good citizenship begins. Then /

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1 I, x.
2 I, xi.
3 I, xii.
4 I, xiii.
5 II, i - vii.
6 II, ix - x.
7 II, ix.

Then, the Church must be a Church. Holy-days, for example, lose their religious significance if they become mere cessations from labour and occasions of physical relaxation.[1] Nor should the Church attempt to undertake secular business.[2] It must stand in the community as the means of Grace, and as such alone. Thus it must be adequately served by its pastors, must at the same time be adequately supported, and finally must regard as part of its function an interest in such economic facts as poverty.[3] Bucer deals at considerable length with each of these problems. There was, of course, in the situation, which he was addressing, the necessity for much detailed re-organisation on these heads.

At this point a very large section[4] is devoted to the question of divorce. Henry VIII's divorce was a most important factor in the succession to the throne. The political and religious constitution turned upon its legitimacy. On the face of things, therefore, one might, at this safe distance from the scene of turmoil, sneer at Bucer's over burdened argument. It should be borne in mind, however, that Bucer was not simply flattering Edward. Long before, while in Strasburg, he had considered the legitimacy of Henry's divorce.[5] The point he makes here is not that divorce should be permitted on the occasion of adultery. That event was covered, as it was covered in the /

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1 II, x.

2 II, xi.

3 II, xii - xiv.

4 II, xv - xlvii.

5 Hopf, op. cit., p. 1. But he did not agree that the marriage was illegal. Hastings Eells, "Martin Bucer" (1931) pp. 122 ff. In this view he agreed with the Swiss Reformers against the Lutherans, who wanted to permit even bigamy. Hence perhaps the stronger Lutheran tendencies of the Anglican establishment. It is interesting to note that Grynæus who was collecting the opinions of the Reformers for Henry, urged the divine commandment of LEV. XVIII, 16 (the prohibition against uncovering a brother's nakedness) while Bucer replied in that of DEUT. XXV, 5 ff (Compare ST. MARK XII, 19 ff. and parallels).

the Mosaic legislation, by the execution of the guilty parties. The question argued in this instance is the rightness of divorce on the grounds of incompatibility. In an age when women were socially inferior, this argument could be most important for them, since it was based upon the individual right of a person to some responsible direction of his own life under God.

Bucer then returns to the detail of social laws.[1] Youth should be instructed both in affairs and in the use of leisure; and thus he urged the re-establishment of various arts and healthy pastimes. Mercantile practice should also be reformed, also public amusements, labour, arts, games, and even private expenditure. That is, in general he emphasised the need for consistency. If children are to be directed to piety they must not be thrust into circumstances where their virtues are prostituted.[2] Whether one can agree with the control of public amusement and private expenditure raises a question which the independence of Englishmen might resent. In fact, of course, both principles are now practised, even to the detail which Bucer urged that merchandise which fed extravagance should not be permitted at the ports without restraint.

The final sections[3] concern the more restricted field of law and punishment. There was a need, he thought, for the clarification and reformation of the laws. He then discusses the manner of appointing magistrates, who, he thinks, ought to be local people who are both acquaint with, and in a sense responsible for, the people under their charge. As regards punishment, God's law provides a useful guide both of /

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1 II, xlviii.
2 II, xlix - lv.
3 II, lvi - lx.

of moderation and severity. The rights of the subject have to be borne in mind both as regards his person and his property. In short, the aim of the Christian state is to bring Christian obedience, both public and private, to the greatest number of citizens.

This very restricted outline of Bucer's argument cannot do it justice; it may, however, serve as comment upon the influence which the Reformation movement was beginning to exert in the larger councils of Europe. The Scriptural authority was to be tested not only within the comparatively limited bounds of a city state, but in a national revolution which would at last issue into an imperial policy. Unfortunately, the experiment was cut short in England where it might have had the best chance of developing satisfactorily: and by the time it was resumed, the Reformation as the original Reformers had envisaged it, was already discredited.

(ii) Calvinism /

(ii) Calvinism and Monarchomachism.

If Bucer has to be included amongst the Reformers, his eclipse at the death of Edward is typical of the phase into which Reform was passing. It is true that the leaders of this new period, men like Knox and Buchanan in Scotland, Hotman in France, Althusius in Herborn and Emden, were products of the original Reformers school, and, as Lang[1] says, "it was precisely (these) decided Calvinists who, first amongst the men of evangelical faith, and so early as the sixteenth century, not merely developed natural law theoretically, but at the same time, as political publicists, made it a weapon in the conflicts of the time." But the principle which they advocated was no longer a purely Reformed doctrine. All the Reformers, and Calvin was the most positive in his endeavours, hoped "to find the foundations for an evangelical Christian conception of the state in the ethical principles of the Bible"; whereas the monarchomachists, in asserting the right of the people, even if these people were Christians, to a sovereign right to determine national policy, were transferring the authority of the state from its mystical reference to Deity to a mundane contract between ruler and ruled. At this point medieval society finally died.

No doubt the transition was gradual; and no doubt also the master in Geneva could be quoted as speaking as if the people, by proxy at least, could act against unrighteous rulers. But characteristic of all /

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1 In his article, "The Reformation and Natural Law" in "Calvin and the Reformation", pp. 72 ff.

all the Reformers is that they were concerned in the first instance with religion. For all its concern with the external means of Christian obedience,[1] the "Institutes" is a religious book.[2] The state into which it must be read was a divine ordinance - something which, however much it might have to be reformed, did not require to be re-created. Thus, as Doumergue remarks,[3] Calvin may in one sense be said to advocate the sovereignty of the people (that,is, believing people), but in another sense he denies it. The state needed the Church and the Church needed the state. The main question for the Reformers was the nature of the true Church. They were less concerned about the nature of the true state.

This essentially medieval view perished in 1553. Henry VIII had been regarded as the ideal Protestant prince[4] until the brief reign of Edward VI /

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1 Book IV of the Institutes is entitled, "De Externis Mediis ad Salutem" (viz., Church and State).

2 Scott Pearson, op. cit., pp. 3: 76 ff.

3 "Jean Calvin", V, pp. 507 ff.

4 Bohatec, op. cit., pp. 583 ff: 615 ff. The references to Henry VII in Herminjard illustrate his growth in popularity. In a letter from Sturm to Bucer (November 1535) it is noted that Henry had broken with the Pope (III, p. 364). By October 1538 Calvin is writing to Farel (in a letter now lost) that Henry is undertaking "la destruction des abus" (V, p. 155, note) and later (March 1539) of Henry's positive moves towards Reform (V, pp. 256 ff). In October of the same year, Calvin wrote to Viret (VI, pp. 72 ff), Bucer (VI, pp. 72 ff) and Farel (VI, pp. 110 ff) expressing concern over Henry's Six Articles, but by November, he is reporting the news of Henry's polite reception of German ambassadors (VI, p. 128). By April 1540 Calvin is saying " . . . Anglus spem facit majorem . . . " (VI, p. 205 ff) and hoping that France will be influenced for Reform through him. Henry's volte-face in 1540 nonplussed both Calvin (VI, p. 237) and Bucer (VI, 245 - "Anglus totus fierit"). By 1541 Calvin is telling the Duchess of Ferrara of Capito's book which has been dedicated to Henry (VII, pp. 317 ff). In the Turkish threats of 1543 Calvin expresses hopes that England will take part in the defence of Europe (VIII, pp. 459 ff). Henry, however, had his own political ambitions, particularly against France, and the Reformers were on much better terms with Cranmer. Bucer dedicated his "Metaphrases et Enarrationes" to him /

Edward VI had produced an even better example. But Edward was succeeded by Catholic Mary. About the same time (1549) the death of Margaret, Queen of Navarre, removed the partial toleration of Protestants which had been gradually won from Francis. Francis had himself been succeeded in 1547 by Henry II, and the years 1547-9 were "[un] époque de la lune de miel dans les relations de Calvin avec le cour [de France]."[1]

But these fortunate years were overshadowed by the failure of the Schmalkaldic wars to do more than achieve an Interim Security for German Protestantism. Moreover, Henry II's name was coupled by that of a Medici, so that when political advantage was to be gained by persecution of Protestants, their partial toleration was replaced in 1551 by the even fiercer Edict of Chateaubriand which declared them to be guilty of lèse-majesté.[2] Here were the beginnings of that internecine strife which divided France into warring camps.

These French hatreds are the sign of the new period that was beginning. The formation of the Society of Jesus (1540) and the theological hardening of the Council of Trent (1545) were taking their effect. Protestantism was now a political as well as a religious creed. In the Netherlands and in Scotland, and to some extent in France, the appeal was not only to religious faith but also to the national independence which that faith - because it was opposed to that of hated authorities - symbolised. /

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him (VI, p. 76) and held correspondence with him as a particular friend (VI, p. 109). These references show the interest of all the Reformers in Henry's policy and also indicate the point of contact, through Bucer and Cranmer, of Reform to England.

1 de Crue, op. cit., p. 32.

2 de Crue, op. cit., p. 35.

symbolised. It is thus particularly in France and Scotland that one finds the strongest exposition of Monarchomachism,[1] open revolt, that is to say, against legally established authority: and its justification there is that it represented clear rights of the citizens to a measure of assent in their affairs, rights which had been recognised in the middle age, and rights which were ignored by the parties in power. In England, religion was not opposed to national liberty, and for that reason Monarchomachism did not flourish to anything like the same degree in that country. Politically, however, Elizabeth looked back beyond Mary and Edward, to her father Henry, for her pattern of sovereignty. She supported the Calvinists of Scotland and Holland, but she distrusted the political influence which, in their struggle for existence, they had begun to claim over the government of their countries. If she was a Protestant, she was also a Tudor. Thus Thomas Cartwright, in advocating his doctrines of Puritanism, had to be above all things mindful to avoid politics.[2] In England, Puritanism was always open to the charge of disloyalty.

Monarchomachism appealed, as Dr Lang points out, to rights that were essentially "natural". The Reformers themselves had not required to do so. Their concern was not with the right state but with the right Church. At bottom they had assumed the acceptance by the sovereign (himself a servant of God) of the logically uncovered truth of God. This comment applies to their social as well as their ecclesiastical thought. There is no inconsistency in the fact that most of Bucer's writings, for /

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[1] The Netherlands, unlike Luther's Saxony or Calvin's Geneva, had no tradition of political independence, and the Reformation remained therefore a personal matter until later in the century. Lindsay II, pp. 224.

[2] Scott Pearson, op. cit., pp. 6 ff.

for example, concern the Church, and only the "De Regno Christi" the state, for he was addressing a sovereign who agreed with him in matters of faith. The monarchomachists, however, had to revise their ideas of the more ultimate problem - of the state itself. The prince was no longer being presented with the one true faith. Religion itself was divided into warring alternatives, each claiming to be the truth and each therefore demanding his absolute support. The principle "cuius regio, euis religio" was an inadequate measure of the situation; for faith must propagate, and states must have spheres of influence, warlike if not peaceful. Since both faiths cried, "Thus saith the Lord" it followed that more ultimate references than Scripture or the Fathers were also cited. They were thus philosophical rather than literary. Grotius' "de belli et pacis" exemplifies this appeal as well as the pathetic cynicism that descends upon the unfortunate layman who is tossed about by conflicting ideologies. He seeks a justice that would stand even if the God Whom the contestants were so loudly invoking should be unjust.

The naturalism of monarchomachic thought thus leant heavily in the direction of secularism. The worship of God having failed to provide a unifying force in social life men were seeking one that would be so. They do the same to-day in circumstances of similar religious disillusion; and they seek the alternative truth in the same physical alternates of state, family and individual. The monarchomachist argued his case on the assumption that society is a contract, in the first place, between

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the individual and the monarch, the monarch being responsible for such matters as defence and justice, the individual agreeing to refer all such matters to the sovereign. The king's power was thus mandatory. He was a servitor servitorum in a real sense, politically first amongst spiritual equals.

It may be said that such an argument is not necessarily "secular" in an anti-religious sense. The political economy of the Old Testament rests on just this relationship between king and people, and behind it lay the over-ruling covenant made by the nation in a mystical figure with the Deity. Moreover, it was upon such a covenantal relationship that medieval society had been built. Thus Knox might be, in one sense, called a monarchomachist insofar as he bargained with his monarch: but his appeal was based upon Scripture when he said that, "the people assembled together in one bodie of ane Commounwelth, unto whom God has given sufficient force" could lawfully "nocht onlie . . . resyst, but also . . . suppres all kynde of opin idolatrie",[1] he meant by the qualification, "lawfully" the authority of God as revealed in His Word. One's mind springs immediately to the judgment of Calvin even in 1536 that image worship should be forcibly suppressed.[2] The sanction of such actions was the revelation of God. Thus, the relevant term of relationship was not the secular "contract" but the religious "covenant",[3] the covenant made between man and man, and between man and his Society precisely /

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1 Quoted from Scott Pearson, op. cit., pp. 79 ff.

2 In the "Institutio" - see above, p. . 13 q.

3 Doumergue, op. cit., pp. 479 ff.

precisely because of, and with strict reference to, the Covenant between God and historical men like Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses.

The primary issue of monarchomachism was not, however, its secularism although, of course, it belongs to that stream of political thought which flowed throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. There were Jesuit as well as Protestant monarchomachists. Moreover, there were completely secular interpretations of the principles at issue, tinged with cynicism as with Hobbes, and to a lesser extent with Locke,[1] with romanticism as with Rousseau or brutality as with Swift. The primary issue was the justification of action, if necessary, the action of civil war. Doumergue, as has been already said, makes out a case for the "passive resistance" of believers even in Calvin's political thought. But passive obedience does not win wars or gain territories. It implies a secular authority which is actuated by good-will and open to reasonable advice based upon an ultimate Truth and justice. Such was the British rule in India and thus the ground of the success of Mahatma Gandi's pacifism. And such, as has been said, was the assumption of all Reformers. The issue for the monarchomachist was much more like the situation in Nazi occupied Norway of the established Christian Church.[2] Its opposition to the Nazi policy of evangelisation brought it into close alliance with the political opposition of patriots to the invading forces. The alliance was embarrassing because of the danger that patriotism would confuse itself /

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1 See Lang, op. cit., pp. 85 ff.

2 "The Universal Church in God's Design", pp. 89 ff.

itself with a religious faith that had not been practised in times of peace. To make quite clear to invader and patriot alike that the issues at stake were matters of Christian conduct alone the Church authorities obeyed the German order to refrain from making prayer for the Royal family in the course of the service. In this searching of heart Luther was re-discovered. It was proved that, although he taught the doctrine of the two realms he emphasised that both realms were God's, so that as long as - but only as long as - the authority of the state acknowledges God as the highest moral authority the state is an "order of God". Melanchthon's teaching of the two tables bears the same significance. The special duty of the Church is to carry out the precepts of the first table, and the special duty of the state is to carry out those of the second. "Magistratus est vox decalogi"; but Caesar may not presume upon his power to speak about the precepts of the first table. He cannot ascend higher than his own place and even in the second table he cannot alter one commandment.

This issue faces the Church in many different forms to-day. In the Germany of Nazism, for instance, there was a "Church struggle" which involved in many cases a conflict between patriotism and conscience. And in Western civilisation generally there is an inner conflict between Christian faith and materialist belief. Perhaps, however, these conflicts are less like those of monarchomachism than the first conflicts of the faith with a pagan Empire. The conflicts of the monarchomachists were civil wars, - wars of ideologies claiming to be alike Christian, and the toleration which Locke at last preached to a weary Europe was not /

not perhaps altogether untouched with disillusion. Monarchomachism was itself a phase which passed from the fury of a Knox to the sectarian interest of the Non-conformist churches[1] which sought liberty of conscience for themselves rather than the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

In this change the Decalogue suffered an eclipse. The will of God could no longer confidently be proclaimed. One turned to the "inner light" of the Quakers or the idea of "conscience" of which the English moralists were to become the noted exponents. The Decalogue was not, of course, ignored. The Church still used it in its liturgy and its catechisms; and there was a steady flow of devotional literature on the subject.[2] The Decalogue still, indeed, affected private life, but its acceptance as a dynamic medium of the divine will was not single minded. Secular standards were replacing it. For confirmation of this view it is only necessary to glance at such a work as Heppe's "Reformed Dogmatics". The theology of Reform as theology became more and more exact in orthodoxy, but at the same time more restricted in application. Although the chapters pass through the familiar argument that begins with knowledge of God and passes through the doctrines of man's fall and Christ's redemption to the actual historical institution of the Church with its sacraments, there is lacking that last discussion of the state and our obedience to it. In the Chapter on the "Covenant of Works and the /

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1 Niebuhr, "Human Destiny", pp. 210 ff.

2 See Note 14 at end.

the Righteousness of the Law"[1] there is no mention of the Decalogue at all. For these theologians, God's covenant belongs to Ur-Geschichte rather than Geschichte. It is with Adam's conscience that we are concerned, and with men here and now only insofar as they are represented in him. It is little wonder that by the end of the 17th century the fixed form of preaching and the ponderous theological orthodoxy was already becoming unreal to the actual conduct of life. And once preaching and theology lost their real point of contact, Church discipline began to lose its meaning too.

In this eclipse of vital faith in a dynamic Word of God one may see a situation similar to those that have been described in Old Testament and medieval times. The Decalogue had its revivals, and supremely in Calvin. Perhaps, therefore, it is sufficient to remark once more in conclusion that our own times are witnessing a most energetic revival of Calvin's work and that, apart from theological studies altogether, there is a popular concern for a renewed emphasis upon the Will of God as the sanction of human conduct, and particularly, men are seeking that Will in the Decalogue.

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1 pp. 281 ff.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Note 1, p. 2. Three books appeared recently on the subject of Freudian ethics:- "Ethics for Unbelievers", by Amber Blanco White, "Man for himself", by Erich Fromm, "Man's Quest for Significance", by Lewis Way. The titles explain the point of view common to all, viz. the rejection of religion as a primary factor in human experience. Religion is at best a means to an end. It is, however, significant that such terms as "conscience" are freely used in the discussion of human failure. The point for this study is that Freudian psychology is at last being forced to give a constructive rather than a critical analysis of the human situation.

Note 2, p. 2. The question, "What ought we to do?", the great question of humanity, is the entrance to the Christian faith; none can evade it who wish to enter the sanctuary. But it is also the gate through which one passes out of the sanctuary again, back into life; but the question . . . . has gained new meaning. No magic transformation has taken place within the sanctuary of faith; the human being who passes through those portals, both on his way in and on his way out, is the same human being: erring, imperfect, weak. But something has happened to him within the sanctuary, which, although it has taken place in secret and is only partially visible to the eyes of the world, has made him a different person, something which has opened his eyes and his heart to a reality which he never knew before: the reality of the living God. There he stands - as one who has been touched by God, whose heart has been pierced by Him, as one has has come under the stern judgment of God and has tested the Divine mercy, as one who can never seek the meaning of his life and the answer to that great human question anywhere else save "There" - there he stands, this weak human being, in the midst of life, among other people; but because he comes 'from thence', he now has another "position" in this world, and it is <u>this</u> which makes him a Christian."

Note 3, p. 15. "Revelation and Reason", E. T. (1946), Preface, p. ix. A standard work like Newman Smyth's "Christian Ethics" (1894) illustrates the point. Ethics there is said to be fulfilled in religion and the Christian revelation, thus, appears as a sort of climax of an "ideal". Calvin, incidentally, is mentioned only twice - once for his "crushing logic", and once as an example, with Melanchthon and Hooker, of the Reformation practice of having a wife chosen for one.

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Note 4, p. 17. This idea of "Augenblicklichkeit" in Brunner is like Barth's idea of the Church as an "Ereignis". Paul mentions in COL. 1, v.24 the necessity of a continual filling up in believers' experience and action of the work of Christ. The question to be settled is the balance of this active faith, and the actions that have been done once for all. B. B. Warfield in an article, "Calvin's doctrine of the knowledge of God" in "Calvin and the Reformation" (1909) illustrates the Reformer's insistence that Scripture conveys its immediate i.e. its saving reference in itself by the concurrent action of the Holy Spirit.

Note 5, p. 29. e.g. ROM., 7, vv. 21 - 23 - By the "law that when I would do good, evil is present with me" is meant "the observable fact of disunity in human nature." This fact is distinguished from the "law of God" in which the apostle delights, namely, the divine revelation pointing to the primeval harmony. The "law in my members" is both the observable fact of disunity and the fact of "sin" which is the cause of disunity; but sin is itself known only by a revelation. It is the law of God and the law of sin that are in conflict.

This is the train of thought in Calvin's remark (INST. 2: 7: 2) that Paul "because he had to dispute with perverse teachers . . . was sometimes obliged . . . to speak of the Law (i.e. the revelation) in a more restricted sense, merely as law (i.e. the observable fact of an order referring beyond human comprehension). It is the argument "If ye then, being evil, know . . . how much more . ."

Note 6, p. 46. The distinction between a "king" and a "tyrant" lay in the fact that the king ruled "according to law, while the tyrant ignored or violated" it. So A. J. Carlyle, op. cit., 18. Ideally, the Christian idea of community was equalitarian, "lordship" making its appearance "as a consequence of the Fall of man" - Gierke, op. cit., 38. The idea of the "divine" right of kings was not in evidence before Gregory the Great, who appealed to the O.T. for support; but the idea lapsed until the 17th century - Carlyle, 26 - 7. Fundamentally, therefore, the medieval idea of State was of a "Right State" where the law of the community was the basis of justice and the individual, each in his own place, was the unit of society - Gierke, 7: 12: also Pollock, op. cit., 47.

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Note 7, p. 98. He exclaims against the Roman officials, and points out the difficulty of opposing them since they claim to speak in God's Name. But he does use the word "resist" (zustreben : zusteenn). His conclusion, however, is, "davon ein ander Mal mehr" - referring no doubt to his "Address to the Christian Nobility" and his "Babylonian captivity".

Note 8, p. 99. The paragraphing is rather loose. Luther apparently added to an original work that dealt mainly with the first two commandments. Perhaps the first sketch of all contained only the first seventeen paragraphs, for the eighteenth is headed "Von dem anderen guten werck", as if it was itself an appendix to a thesis already complete.

Note 9, p. 197. Not that the Church is to aim at being an earthly state, or that it can tolerate the desire of the State to the functional rights of the Church, but, as Barth points out "Rechtfertigung und Recht", E.T., "Church and State" Ronald Howe (1939) pp. 71 ff , the Church looks to an eternal state, not a Church, as its consummation. Thus, as Prof. Georges Florovsky, "The Church and her Responsibility", ("The Universal Church in God's Design", pp. 42 ff.) says, the Church may be in opposition or in power, but its ethics remains the same, viz. the revealed will of God. This principle is abundantly true of Calvin, because his ethics was so firmly based upon revelation - Cheneviere, op. cit., passim, e.g. p. 80; Lobstein, op. cit., p. 62.

Note 10, p. 201. T. F. Torrance, "Calvin's Doctrine of Man" deals fully with the subject in chapters 2 - 6. The image of God is always of God's initiation, whether in the universe or in man himself. It applies therefore to man's existence as a creature as well as to his regeneration in Christ. It is, in fact, a reflection of God, and it applies particularly to man since God has made man to be appreciative of His Work - the spectator in the cosmological theatre. In a sense this is a specifically Christian view but in another sense it is a cosmic philosophy. That is, it is true even of unbelievers, to whom, nevertheless, it may remain unknown until the Holy Spirit reveals it.

Man's function in the universe is of course gratitude and adoration for the Creator. There are several passages in the "Sermons" which illustrate this point, e.g. ". . . la vie des hommes /

hommes luy (a Dieu) est precieuse, comme il fut hier declaire: ce sont creatures faites a son image." (C.R. LIV, 339). ". . . Nature a voulu comme lier les hommes en union ensemble, et Dieu les a tous formez a son image." (ibid, 351.)

Note 11, p. 221. Cf. Cheneviere, op cit., p. 75, "La loi naturelle et le Décalogue ont . . . une seule et même origine, mais l'une, la loi naturelle telle que nous la connaissons aujourd'hui, n'est que le pâle reflet de l'autre Quoting INST. 2: 8: 1, 4: 20: 16, ibid, p. 80, "le Decalogue remplace donc practiquement la conscience, au moins pour le chrétien." (ibid, 84) "La loi morale contient la seule regle parfaite de justice, main son rôle n'est pas le même pour la vie spirituelle individu et pour la vie du monde, considéré comme un organisme composé d'êtres déchus vivant naturellement loin de Dieu." That is to say, from the point of view of Christian thinking, but only so, the morality of the non-Christian is identified with a natural law which is identical in turn with the Decalogue. Only the Christian says so: it is precisely the authority of God in Christ that the non-Christian denies. Bohatec (op. cit., pp. 383, ff.) points out how Calvin, by looking to the Scriptures for positive instruction, retained a stronger Christian emphasis than Luther, who sought in it only the limits of prohibition. Chenevière's conclusion is (p. 88) "il est impossible a un chrétien de connaitre et meme de concevoir la 'justice' en dehors de celle qui nous est revélée dans le Decalogue et dans la Parole de Dieu en general." ibid, 96. "Nous croyons volontiers, avec Lang et Peter Barth contre Brunner, Doumergue, et Gloede, que l'ordre de nature ne peut nullement jouer dans la pensée de Calvin le role d'un guide en matière de science politique." ibid, p. 104. ". . . pour trouver ce qui est licite, le chrétien n'a pas a hésiter entre le sentiment de la conscience et le texte precis du Décalogue; c'est au Decalogue qu'il doit s'en référer."

Note 12, p. 233. Because his "esse" is "cognoscere". See Torrance, op. cit., pp. 29 ff for references. "Cognoscere" implies dependence upon God, so that human life is not an absolute, as divine life is. It is the assumption on our part that our life is an independent function that makes us sinners. The "esse" which we lose in sin is not, of course, a physical withdrawal. But the fact that we are not mere brutes is due to the desire of God for us: so that our "esse" is the "percipere" of God, which is dynamic in the sense of its making us constantly aware, if in disguised forms, of His Majesty. Thus sin is deformity, disease, living death, all the more so since God maintains us in our special status above the brutes. Only when His "percipere" is matched by our "cognoscere" of our state as "percipi" do we attain true humanity.

Note 13, p. 258. "Man's Disorder and God's Design" vol. IV, pp. 47 ff. The point he makes is that the Una Sancta is as a fact broken, and with it has gone the sense of ultimate justice in international dealings: and yet it is upon this sense that the world can alone reach security. There must be a power more ultimate than the individual state. At present we are unable to reach a greater international security than that offered by the International Court of Justice, which is at best tentative. Treaties between states are thus "political" arrangements, that is, depending for their motive and their fulfilment upon the relative strengths of the participants. The small state is regarded as being unable to defend itself and thus having nothing to offer the commonwealth of nations.

The Una Sancta was not, and could not be, the political basis of European unity but it represented the power of European opinion, which, based upon the ultimate of divine justice, was strong enough to make international treaties morally secure. With the dilution of Christian faith Europe has become less secure within her own borders. States treat one another with the scant respect they once kept for their colonies. Wars, once fought for specific ends and ending in agreement, are now no settlement. The vanquished wait for their opportunity; and the only security the victor can hope for is the annihilation of the enemy.

Note 14, p. 309. For example, Edward Elton's "God's Holy Will, etc." (1625) published in London. James Durham, in Glasgow, published "The Law Unsealed" which was in its fifth edition by 1677, and was reprinted at least four times later - 1715, 1777 and 1804. In France Nicole published his "Instructions Theologiques" in 1769, but it is not directly a commentary upon each separate commandment.

There is a curious lapse in the production of new work - apart from John Owen's "Lectures" of 1675 and W. H. Stowell's "The Ten Commandments" (1824) - between these early works and the revival of the subject in the 1870's onward. Dale wrote his "Ten Commandments" in 1870 and it ran to several editions. Dean Farrar wrote "The Voice from Sinai" in 1896, and George Jackson His "Ten Commandments" in 1898. Most of these books were based upon sermons; and there were many more by lesser known authors.

By 1902, F. S. Schenck was writing "The Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer - a sociological study", in New York. H. S. Coffin could still publish on the same subject in 1930.

It is interesting to note how in post-war Germany there is a cry for a Church based on the Ten Commandments. Thomas Mann has written on "The Tables of the Law".

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and, as a source of ethical comment,

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| "The Ordonnances and Consilia" | C.R.XXXVIIIa |
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